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A Week of War in Spain

The fall of Castellon marks another stage of Franco's slow progress southward along the Mediterranean coast; Sagunto is his next objective, and Loyalist General Miaja is reported to be gathering troops and throwing up fortifications for the defense of Valencia. But it is by no means certain that with Sagunto taken and the Teruel-Sagunto railway firmly in his grip, Franco will knock his head against these defenses. The possession of the railway will, as we have previously pointed out, enable him to shift troops at will over a wide front, and he may very well turn his attention to a sector weakened by Miaja in order to protect Valencia. Already in the south the Nationalists are striking for the mercury mines of Almaden, which have been an important mainstay of the Loyalist export trade. Or Catalonia may be the next objective. If the French frontier is actually closed, it will indeed leave the Catalans naked to their enemies. Though this may well be part of a far-reaching Anglo-French policy which looks toward a negotiated peace, and though Mussolini may welcome any arrangement which will permit him to liquidate the Spanish adventure without loss of face, it is hardly to be imagined that Franco, if he is victorious in the field, can be expected to accept terms which will leave him less than victorious in the outcome. Peace at that price may prove but an uneasy achievement.

And the Waters Prevailed

There seems small reason to doubt that the breaking of the dikes of the Yellow River was undertaken deliberately by the Chinese, and the act has proved one of the most successful defensive stratagems in all history. The break came at precisely the proper moment to cause the Japanese the maximum trouble, and to catch within the flood area vast quantities of Japanese motorized equipment, artillery and stores. For the time being it has definitely stopped the Japanese drive on Chengchow and it now appears that the Chinese are able to keep open the railway from Sianfu through that junction to Hankow, thus preserving their Russian supply-line. A new threat to this line is reported developing north of the Yellow River, at Loyang, but it seems questionable whether the Japanese can operate successfully from their very tenuous positions in Shansi Province.

As to the price to be paid, in death, destitution and famine for the use of flood as a weapon, that is for the future to determine. The Japanese are already shrieking to the world that it is a barbarian and criminal act. But the verdict of history has acclaimed William the Silent for precisely the same line of conduct in opening the dikes of Holland to defeat the Spaniards; inundations saved Alkmaar and Leyden, the latter city being rescued by a fleet sailing over the flooded lowlands. The relief of Leyden was the turning point in the long

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struggle of the Dutch for freedom from intolerable oppression, and few Dutchmen today but hold in high honor the name of William of Orange, though at the time his measures met bitter opposition from many who were thus rendered homeless.

Meanwhile the Japanese have bombed the island of Hainan, off the south coast of China, and are threatening to occupy the island. These threats are of course intended for French ears, since Hainan commands the French-occupied territory of Kwang-chow-wan, and the establishment of a Japanese air base there would be a direct threat to Haiphong, the principal northern port of French Indo-China and seaward terminus of the two railways—that to Yunnan-fu and the shorter line to the Kwang-si frontier at Langson—by which large quantities of supplies have been reaching China. Reports that French military advisers are to replace the German advisers of the Chinese, who were recently ordered home, have added to Japanese annoyance. However, a direct attack on French Indo-China would be no simple matter. The garrison of 30,000 men has recently been reinforced; the Japanese have no experience in jungle fighting, where they would be almost helpless before the tough, acclimated soldiers of the Foreign Legion and the Tirailleurs Tonkinois; and if the French were to become belligerents they could be of enormous assistance to the Chinese, as they were to the Poles when Warsaw was all but lost.

That Anglo-American Trade Treaty

The rumor that negotiations for an Anglo-American trade treaty have broken down is sharply denied in Washington. It is pointed out that active bargaining between American and English experts did not begin until late in March, and that approximately a thousand items are being considered, each of which has required separate, detailed study. The Franco-American treaty took many months, and the volume of trade affected by it was only a fraction of the commerce between the United States and England. The current rumors of impending failure are thought by observers to be part of a propaganda campaign supported by the Federation of British Industries, the London equivalent of our National Association of Manufacturers. In the decade since the FBI persuaded the English Tory Party to adopt protection, it has fought stoutly against any movement towards freer trade. Nevertheless, it is believed that the Chamberlain government, for reasons of international policy alone, cannot permit the negotiations to collapse. A breach with the United States would seriously embarrass Mr. Chamberlain in his heralded negotiations with the dictator powers of Europe. Reports that a settlement of the English war debt is to be linked with the trade treaty also seem to be untrue. There is no doubt that England would like to clear up her indebtedness, if this could be done by a merely nominal payment. But with an American congressional election approaching, there is no likelihood that the Roosevelt administration would agree to the British offer.

Spy Melodrama

The indictment of eighteen persons on charges of spying for the German government is a sensational and significant event. It is so, not because there is anything new about military espionage; all countries regularly engage in it as a matter of routine. As a usual thing, counter-espionage contents itself with keeping track of foreign spies, preventing important information from falling into their hands and, if necessary, dealing with the culprits by legal means. But diplomatic considerations almost invariably—except in time of war—prevent any publicity connecting suspects with a specific government. The astonishing thing about these indictments is that they not only reveal the hand of Berlin in what has occurred, but actually indict German government officials living in Germany. And this was done after consultation with Washington. The affair seems to be linked with the obviously inspired news stories given out after the adjournment of Congress, that Senators were going to study foreign affairs during the recess and that the State Department hoped the citizens would become more interested in our foreign policy, in view of the extreme seriousness of the world situation. Are we seeing the beginning of a campaign to abandon the Neutrality Act and stimulate a war psychology?

Holding the Jews for Ransom

Germany has suddenly increased her activities against the Jews. Their shops are being picketed and all the long list of legal discriminations are strictly enforced. The government is moving to seize the property of Jews living in other countries, regardless of their nationality. Various explanations of this activity are heard. It is suggested that conditions for the mass of the Germans have become so serious that some immediate distraction of their attention was imperative. Another reason which seems to us more important is not incompatible with the first. The Nazi government desperately needs money. Although it has already stolen much of the property of the Jews, some still remains. For several years, but particularly since the seizure of Austria, the Nazis have developed to a high degree the technique of holding for ransom Jews who have money or have wealthy friends abroad. It is widely believed, for example, that an enormous sum was paid to obtain the release of Dr. Freud. No stretching of probability occurs if we suppose that the Nazis have deliberately set out to make life unendurable for the Jews in the hope that they will give up their worldly possessions, and also obtain large sums from Jews abroad, as a condition of their escape. Already, the fines levied against Jewish emigrants amount to 90 percent of their wealth; with enough systematic tor-

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ture, the percentage can even be raised. In some cases, even after the ransom has been paid the victim is not released. Hitler's code is a little lower than that of the American gangsters, who nearly always live up to their bargain.

What to Do with Our Surpluses?

Mr. John T. Flynn, in his department in this week's New Republic, "Other People's Money," comments on the decision of the WPA to help the clothing industry by buying a large amount of clothing for free distribution in relief. He indicates a danger that if manufacturers are thus relieved of the necessity of getting rid of their stocks by lowering prices, there may be no end to the process. High prices cause low production and unemployment; the government steps in and helps to sustain the prices by buying surplus stocks and giving them to the unemployed; the taxpayer pays the bill—or will eventually do so. Of course we cannot long run a whole economy on this principle. But there is more logic in it than Mr. Flynn here indicates. If private enterprise will not work because it produces more goods than people can buy, the least government can do is to see that the surplus goes to the needy. If it did not do so, private enterprise would not work much better than it does. Does Mr. Flynn imply that it would be possible for government to reinforce competitive practices sufficiently so that they would really serve to distribute abundance and prevent unemployment? One trouble is that we have a system in which more than a fair share of the burden falls on the really competitive industries, while others cannot be made to compete. The clothing industry is about as far from monopolistic as any industry could be. If competition in it were carried to its logical conclusion, the result would certainly be sweatshop wages and hours. We think Mr. Flynn's objection would have more point if the WPA were buying surplus steel or cement.

Building Labor Is Not at Fault

Go out and capture a typical example of the Man in the Street and he will probably tell you that the depression has come largely because there isn't any building, and that the reason there is no building is because the workers in these trades demand such impossibly high wages that no one can afford to employ them. The editors of Fortune in their current issue puncture this idea. In 1937, they point out, the annual wage in building, for those actually employed, was not more than $1,050. Most men got only about 125 days' work in a year. The average wage rate for the whole country was 92 cents an hour; in some sections, notably the South, it went down to 40 cents or less. The editors then make a case study of a large-scale housing project in New York City, Knickerbocker Village, built with labor at the average hourly rate of $1.15. Materials cost $2,636,000, labor $2,020,000, overhead $1,561,000 and land $3,250,000. Thus labor got 21 percent of the total. If it had been cut 25 percent, as is often suggested by those who propose a guaranteed annual wage based on a reduced hourly rate, the cost of construction would have been only 5 percent less. Of the carrying charges, however, cost of construction represents only two-thirds; real-estate taxes and costs of operation represent the other third. Therefore, a cut of 25 percent for labor would save only 3⅓ percent on rentals. A $22.50 apartment would rent for $21.75. The breakdown of private enterprise in housing is a complicated subject, with many factors to be considered. Labor is not wholly guiltless, but as Fortune's figures prove, the wages it now receives do not deserve the major share of the blame. As for the craft organization, the working rules and the general particularism of the industry itself, which stands in the way of modern production methods—that is a different story!

News Notes of a Week

Premier Negrin of Spain made a statement to the press accusing political opponents at home of "cowardice and treason." From other sources came reports that 195 persons are on trial in Madrid charged with espionage for Franco. . . . The Japanese government asked foreigners to evacuate a large area in China because of the war whose existence Japan does not officially admit. The American Department of Commerce warned exporters to Japan that they should sell only on what amounts to a cash-in-advance basis. . . . The election in Ireland gave a victory to the DeValera Party. . . . A sharp issue arose between the United States and Germany over the repudiation of Austria's external debt. . . . Americans at Geneva asserted, and Japanese denied, the well proved charge that the Japanese government encourages the opium trade in the Asiatic territory under its control.

At home, the death of Dr. Royal S. Copeland, United States Senator from New York, suddenly complicated the political outlook. . . . The anti-administration press, having exhausted the possibilities of "purge" as a smear word, shifted to "blacklist bill"—its name for the reasonable and fair proposal that government contracts should not go to persistent violators of the National Labor Relations Act. . . . All charges were dropped against the five Tampa policemen accused of kidnaping and flogging three progressive political workers thirty months ago. One of the victims, Joseph E. Shoemaker, died of the beating. Everyone who has studied the case knows that the men are guilty; their release is evidence that Florida community sentiment on the whole approves of flogging radicals, even if death is involved, and will not punish those guilty of such a crime. The tremendous delay, which by itself made successful prosecution almost impossible, suggests that the authorities shared this popular view.

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Congress Adjourns

IT IS ALMOST a political rule in the United States that the President begins to lose control of Congress practically as soon as he takes office and that by mid-term the two coördinate agencies of government are in a hopeless deadlock. The energies of both are largely diverted from the tasks of government to this inner conflict for power. First terms are sometimes an exception when the President's mandate is overwhelming; wars provide exceptions; and the struggle against depression which characterized Franklin D. Roosevelt's first four years of course provided something of the kind—on the surface. But the familiar developments were clearly manifest in the session of Congress which has just adjourned.

When one reflects that to this natural result of our non-parliamentary form of government there was added in this case the loss of prestige suffered by the President on account of a new and sharp depression, the wonder is, not that Congress kicked up its heels, but that legislation made as much progress as it did. The new measures adopted did not depart far from the direction desired by the administration, either in conception or in detail, and they included a surprising number of important items. The most prominent was of course the new pump-priming appropriation, with the wages-and-hours law as a close second. The agricultural law, with its "ever-normal granary" provision and its new methods of restricting output, together with the requisite appropriations, went safely through all opposition. These three measures alone would have been landmarks for any ordinary administration. But in addition the President got his way in the big-navy bill, flood control, civil aviation, merchant marine and finally in the monopoly investigation, which will probably be the biggest thing in the headlines, at least as far as domestic news is concerned, between now and the November election.

It remains to assess the failure of Congress to follow the President's recommendations, or its action in killing other progressive legislation. The most spectacular struggle was that over the reorganization bill, the defeat of which marked the second major victory of the President's congressional opponents in a frontal attack—the first having been of course the Court bill. It was characteristic of both struggles that they were of little practical consequence and were carried on with a maximum of ignorance, misrepresentation and hysterical fury. The Supreme Court is now reformed in spite of the fact that it was not "packed" and sooner or later Congress will return to the more necessary details of the President's original plan. Our democracy has rarely exhibited a sorrier spectacle than its refusal to render its agents more efficient. But that bill, too, will come up again and will eventually be passed in some form or other—perhaps in the next session.

Two agencies of obstruction were prominent in the session, and both were used with some effect. One is old—the filibuster in the Senate—and the other is relatively new—the autocratic Rules Committee in the House. By filibustering at the beginning of the session, conservative Southern Democrats succeeded in sidetracking the anti-lynching bill. The filibuster is essentially a strike by a minority of Senators who, knowing that the measure they oppose will pass if it comes to a vote, refuse to let the Senate do any business until the object of their dislike is killed. A filibuster is usually more effective at the end than at the beginning of a session; it can be defeated by a two-thirds majority for the cloture of debate. The Rules Committee in the House has the power to decide whether bills—even those that are favorably recommended by other committees—shall come before the House. This, also dominated by conservative Southern Democrats, tried to kill the wages-and-hours bill and succeeded in preventing the House from voting on the Walsh-Healey bill. The Rules Committee has recently used its power for the same purpose as a filibuster in the Senate—it buries bills which it knows would be passed if voted on. This device, like a filibuster, can also be defeated by a sufficiently determined majority, for a bill can be discharged from the Committee by a petition signed by one more than half of the House members. The wages-and-hours bill was so discharged.

The significant thing about this opposition is that it comes mainly from the President's own party. The official opposition—the small minority of Republicans in both houses—need not worry him at all. It is not intelligently led, it has no program, and it can always be smothered with votes. The conservative Democrats sabotaging from the inside, however, have provided whatever danger has arisen to the New Deal. The devices they have used have masked a far larger defection than would be indicated by the number of more prominent anti-administration delegates in Congress. Many members, caught between conservative pressure and the President's popular support or the strength of organized labor or farmers, are glad to be relieved by filibuster or Rules Committee of the embarrassing necessity of going on record by voting for or against specific measures. Party responsibility is thus at a low ebb. It is this situation that gives point to the administration's attempted "purge" of Congressmen and Senators whose regularity is suspect. Even though they may not be defeated, it would be far more healthy to force them into open opposition than to continue the present situation. The country would be better governed if the opposition were larger, more open and better led, and if more issues were debated on the basis of their merits. The present Democratic Party is too miscellaneous a coalition to serve well a consistent program or set of principles.

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Chamberlain Stands with Franco

THERE IS NO LONGER any doubt—if any ever existed—where Chamberlain stands in the Spanish war. He stands with Franco. He permits ships under the British flag to be bombed without a word of protest, because they are bombed by his friends. He is working with all his might to bring about a Rebel victory despite the terrible consequences of such a victory for most of the world, including, in all probability, England.

Chamberlain's plan which lay behind the Anglo-Italian agreement was based on the expectation that the war was about over and would end in a defeat of the Loyalists. At the time, this seemed to many people a safe prediction. Franco's forces were pounding ahead toward the sea, cutting Loyalist Spain in two. The Negrin government was suffering a serious lack of military supplies. But the expected did not happen. The Loyalist resistance not only continued but increased.

It was a condition of the Anglo-Italian agreement that it should not come into effect until there had been a substantial withdrawal of Italian troops from Spain, which to both Chamberlain and Mussolini meant of course that they would stay until they were no longer needed. Thereafter, Italy was to come to terms with France, and when this had happened, England would make an agreement with Germany. No one knows just what terms of Hitler's Chamberlain would accept; very likely he does not himself. We do know, however, in a general way what Germany would demand. She wants the Russo-French alliance broken. She wants some of her colonies back, or compensation in the form of equivalent territory elsewhere. She wants Britain and France not to hinder, perhaps even to help, in her "drive toward the East," a drive which contemplates economic and cultural control, if not actual ownership, of a vast territory in Eastern Europe.

With the Spanish war dragging on, and talk heard of its lasting another year, Mussolini and Chamberlain have become restive. They both want the Anglo-Italian treaty to go into full effect at once. Between them, they have worked out a precious scheme. The "token withdrawal" of Italians from Spain is to be scrapped. Instead of leaving the country, they would just leave the front-line trenches, and retire to some distance, where they would be interned, so to speak, under the eyes of neutral observers. It needs no saying that these soldiers could go back and fight again on a few hours' notice, and would, if occasion arose. Indeed, from Mussolini's past record it is easy to imagine that he would just send a few men to march past the neutral observer, then have them run behind his back and march past once more, like supers in a stage army.

Part of the bargain has been that Chamberlain should put all possible pressure on France, and this he has been doing. Premier Daladier waited until Parliament had adjourned, and then announced that the Franco-Spanish frontier would be closed, and that no more Russian equipment would be landed at Bordeaux and sent overland under customs seals. It is also suggested that Franco may get full belligerent rights. One hardly knows how seriously to take this announcement. The non-intervention agreement has been a mass of hypocrisy from the beginning, in which nearly every government has lied nearly all the time. Even if the statement were true, the Loyalist cause would not be hopeless. There is still some access from the sea, and increasing amounts of military supplies are being manufactured in Spain itself. The granting of belligerent rights would be a serious blow, but not a fatal one.

Politically, however, a firm agreement of this sort would put an end to all hope of anything like a democratic front against the fascist powers. If Great Britain can put such pressure on France as to cause her to betray Loyalist Spain, the peril to Czechoslovakia becomes far greater, and a repudiation of the Franco-Russian understanding not impossible. Chamberlain's apologists answer every criticism with the observation that he is preventing war, and is gaining time until Britain is rearmed. But it looks more and more as though British policy were not actually averting war, but merely making the line-up somewhat different. And the question grows more insistent as to what kind of world we shall have when the British rearmament is at last completed. If these new guns and airplanes are to be used to back up Hitler and Mussolini in their ambition to bestride Europe and Africa, there will be many Englishmen to regret most bitterly that their sacrifices should have been made in such a cause.

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The President and the Primaries

MR. ROOSEVELT'S ATTEMPT to "purge" nine Senators from the Democratic Party has been misinterpreted. Unquestionably emotions are running high in Washington, but it is unfair to say that he and his advisers are animated by personal vindictiveness or a lust for power. In the simplest terms, what they are trying to do is to create a unified liberal party of genuinely national scope.

As everyone knows, we have never had national parties in this country. Instead, we have had two loose federations of state or big-city machines. The Republican federation embraced Middle Western liberals; the Democratic federation Southern reactionaries. In the recent past, Presidents Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt and Wilson were compelled to meet revolts within their own parties. As for Franklin Roosevelt, virtually all of his strictly political opposition has come from Democratic leaders.

Franklin Roosevelt has a somewhat better chance of unifying his party than his predecessors had. There is a realistic basis—painfully realistic—for what he is attempting to do. The practical reason why earlier Presidents could not discipline their party organizations was that the state and big-city bosses, taken together, possessed more patronage and graft than did the White House. With the New Deal, federal expenditures have roughly doubled, and this has compelled a vast, subterranean shift of political forces.

According to estimates, state, county and city expenditures run about $12,000,000,000 a year, while under Mr. Roosevelt federal spending has oscillated between $8,000,000,000 and $10,000,000,000. Nice calculations cannot be made from these figures. No one can tell how much of either sum is available for pap. Nevertheless, it is probably not inaccurate to say that, in any given locality, the value of federal patronage at the present time is at least 75 percent of that of local patronage. Since this proportion is likely to increase, a shift of power into the hands of the President would appear inevitable.

In the current primaries, this Historical Process is visible. Mr. Roosevelt and his advisers represent national unity as well as liberalism. The nine senatorial purgees are symbols of both local autonomy and reaction. So far, the Historical Process has taken a bloody nose in Iowa, where the Roosevelt candidate, Mr. Otha D. Wearin, was badly kicked about by Senator Guy M. Gillette. Although in other primaries Mr. Roosevelt is making skilled use of federal patronage, apparently in Iowa he failed partly through a sudden squeamishness. After the vote, the Wearin manager, State Treasurer Leo Wegman, bewailed the meagerness of Washington's assistance. The machine backers of Mr. Gillette declared privately that, hell, if they'd known Mr. Roosevelt wanted Gillette beaten, they'd have done it themselves—if they had been made the right kind of proposition.

Neither is the Historical Process advancing in the cases of Senators Bennett Champ Clark of Missouri and Augustine Lonergan of Connecticut. The Missouri organization, of which Boss Pendergast of Kansas City is a bright ornament, is blackly reactionary and has set up a united front against Mr. Roosevelt. This is a grave matter for the New Deal, since Mr. Clark is a likely conservative candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1940. He is far younger than Vice President Garner or Secretary of State Hull, and has the immense technical advantage of living in a big, Mississippi Valley state.

Attorney General Cummings, federal patronage dispenser for Connecticut, apparently will decide whether a pro-Roosevelt candidate is to be presented against Mr. Lonergan. Up to now, Mr. Cummings' heart is still faint. Administration members hope earnestly that he will agree to back his brilliant young assistant, Mr. Brien McMahon, who is just concluding the federal government's great civil-liberties trial in Harlan County, Kentucky.

Against the remaining members of the noxious nine, the administration will fight strongly. These contests will be in:

Maryland. – The administration has entered sixty-nine-year-old Representative David J. Lewis, the "little giant," against Senator Millard E. Tydings. Holder of both the Distinguished Service Medal and Cross, leader of the American Legion, Mr. Tydings is one of the stiffest Tories in Congress. Mr. Lewis worked from nine until he was twenty-two in a coal mine. He learned to read in Sunday school, and studied Latin with a kindly minister. A former member of the Tariff Commission, he is an unfailing New Dealer and friend of organized labor. In the coming primary, he will have the active support of Labor's Non-Partisan League. Among avocations, Mr. Lewis interests himself in psychic phenomena, and is a member of the Society for Psychical Research of London.

South Carolina. – The administration will back Governor Olin D. Johnston against the venerable Senator Ellison D. Smith. Mr. Johnston, a former textile-mill worker, has shown himself one of the most genuinely liberal of Southern politicians. He represents the new industrialized South as exactly as old "Cotton Ed" does the plantation system. The LNPL has announced it will campaign in Mr. Johnston's behalf.

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Georgia. – Senator Walter F. George, acid-tongued corporation lawyer, will be opposed by United States District Attorney Lawrence Sabyllia Camp. Camp was picked by White House advisers after it was discovered that Mr. Roosevelt's frequent guest at Warm Springs, Governor E. D. Rivers, was an ex-Klansman. Other candidates will be the red-suspendered Eugene Talmadge, with the slogan: "Free homesteads for the unemployed," and Mr. William G. McRae, favorite of the rapidly reviving Townsend movement.

Indiana. – The Historical Process vindicates itself in Indiana, where local Democratic leaders have long since become magnetized by the pull of federal patronage, and have cast forth Senator Frederick Van Nuys into darkness. Mr. Van Nuys holds an offer of speech-making assistance from Mr. Burt Wheeler's well advertised "flying squadron" of anti-Roosevelt Senators and threatens to run independently. Mr. Alex Gordon, a member of the railroad brotherhoods, former political aid of the Führer-like Paul V. McNutt, and now chairman of Indiana's LNPL, is a candidate for the regular Democratic nomination for Senator. Another possibility is Lieutenant-Governor Henry F. Schricker, a banker and newspaper editor of Knox, Indiana. Mr. Schricker is reported to have no greater regard for the New Deal than Mr. Van Nuys has, but will run if the machine demands it.

Colorado. – Chief Justice Benjamin C. Hilliard, who announced his candidacy after a meeting with Mr. Roosevelt at the White House, is opposing Senator Alva B. Adams. Apropos of nothing, Mr. Hilliard's law firm before his elevation to the bench was Hilliard, Lilyard and Finnicum, a fact which is offered free to F. P. A. On this forthcoming trip to the Pacific Coast, Mr. Roosevelt has arranged to speak in Colorado, reportedly in Mr. Hilliard's behalf.

Nevada. – White House advisers, scratching about for a candidate to place against portly, red-faced Pat A. McCarran, hero of many a mining-camp legend, have picked Albert Hilliard, Reno lawyer and son of the Colorado chief justice. A more formidable candidate appears to be Dr. John Worden, state health officer and labor sympathizer.

Of the six "purge" contests in which it is now fighting actively, the administration seems almost sure to win those in Indiana and South Carolina, and to have better than an even chance in Maryland and Colorado. In Georgia and Nevada, however, the Historical Process seems lagging behind schedule.

The 1938 primaries also afford a testing ground for the new political strength of labor, as expressed through the CIO and the LNPL. In a number of states, labor is preoccupied with attempts to gain a share of control over a major-party organization. In the recent Democratic primary in Pennsylvania, the CIO ran one of its own members, Mr. Tom Kennedy, as a candidate for Governor. Although Mr. Kennedy was beaten, the CIO showed astonishing strength, and many observers believe that it will shortly become the dominant element of the state machine. In New York, the American Labor Party, affiliated with the LNPL, is being anxiously consulted by the Democratic leaders in the selection of candidates. Senator Wagner and Governor Lehman are both expected to stand for re-election. While Mr. Lehman is perhaps not the choice that the ALP itself would make, he is acceptable to it.

Labor has always been a constituent group in the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota, where it is now backing Governor Benson against Mr. Hjalmar Petersen. Governor Benson likewise appears to be receiving the efficient aid of Mr. Hopkins' WPA. In the South Dakota primary on May 3, two LNPL candidates, Messrs. Oscar Foshiem and Emil Loriks, won the Democratic nominations for Governor and Congressman, respectively. Mr. Loriks is leader of the South Dakota Farmers' Union and a notably militant advocate of farmer-labor political coöperation. In the same primary, the Roosevelt candidate for nomination for Senator, Mr. Herbert E. Hitchcock, was defeated by white-sombreroed Tom Berry, a former Governor. In Washington, labor is an accepted partner of the state Democratic Party, and in the September primary will back the fiery Senator Homer T. Bone for reëlection.

However, despite this local success and near-success, labor obviously lacks an authentic voice in the national organization of the Democratic Party. In Washington, it is still a pressure group. In accordance with classic pressure-group tactics, a great part of its energies will go toward defeating its outstanding opponents. As a warning to all bad Congressmen, the LNPL has put its official slug on the eight House Rules Committee members who, on three separate occasions, refused to let the wages-and-hours bill come to a vote. In the final whirling hours of Congress, the same eight men helped kill the CIO's amendment to the Walsh-Healey act, under which concerns found guilty of illegal labor practices by the NLRB would be debarred from receiving government contracts.

The fight against one of the eight, Mr. J. Bayard Clark of North Carolina, has been lost by default. Mr. Clark was renominated in the June 4 primary, and his reëlection is assured. Opposition to another of the eight, Mr. W. J. Driver of Arkansas, is probably hopeless. "Jedge" Driver's home is in the fat, black Mississippi Delta, and his constituents include the plantation riding-bosses who, three years ago, kidnaped and shot members of the Southern Tenant Farmers' Union. Until Arkansas graciously permits sharecroppers to vote, he seems unassailable.

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The LNPL plans to conduct active campaigns in the districts of the remaining six men. In the case of Mr. H. W. Smith of Virginia, it is already energetically supporting his opponent, Mr. William Dodd. Mr. Smith, a banker and dairy farmer, is a Piedmont Lord Macaulay, even voting against the recent recovery measure. Mr. Dodd is a son of the former ambassador to Germany, and is receiving aid from the White House advisers.

Against the labor-baiting Mr. Eugene E. Cox of Georgia, the LNPL is backing Mr. W. J. Crow, a war veteran, farmer and former regional agent of the HOLC. The ineffable Mr. Martin Dies of Texas already has an opponent in Mr. H. C. Hendricks, until lately an expert for the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce. Because of his bad labor stand, however, the LNPL seeks another candidate. The three other Rules Committee members, Messrs. J. Will Taylor of Tennessee, D. H. McLean of New Jersey and C. E. Mapes of Michigan, are Republicans, and the LNPL intends to back their Democratic opponents as soon as the latter are chosen.

The senatorial primary in Kentucky, between Senator Barkley and Governor A. B. "Happy" Chandler, demands a special last word. It has no immediate significance, unless it is considered that Mr. Roosevelt's prestige requires Dear Alben's victory. But in Kentucky, as nowhere else in the country, the earnest student of politics will apparently be permitted to see the Historical Process in naked outline. It is doubtful if Governor Chandler has overlooked a dollar's worth of state pap; certainly the White House advisers have sifted the federal store with a fine-meshed sieve. The vote, when it is counted late on August 6, should determine exactly the Historical Process' present status.

Washington JONATHAN MITCHELL

Will the Witness Step Down?

WHATEVER THE OUTCOME may be of the omnibus injunction suit against Mayor Frank Hague, the Jersey City boss has accomplished one thing. He has managed to obscure the basic issue. The combined forces of the CIO and the American Civil Liberties Union are only asking for an injunction to prevent Hague from denying civil rights to the union organizers who seek a toehold in his notoriously open-shop city. It is a situation comparable to the trial of a murderer for income-tax evasion. For twenty-one years, since the day he began his incredibly long term as Mayor and Mr. Big of Jersey City, New Jersey, Frank Hague has run as corrupt a political machine as the United States has yet produced. He should be on trial for the multitude of crimes packed into that career. Perhaps, in the future, he will be. But in the meantime he has only to fight a simple injunction suit, and it must seem to him pretty small potatoes.

Hague knows, for one thing, that if this injunction is granted—and he must expect it, in view of the admissions he has already blurted out—the case will be appealed to the extremely conservative circuit court and perhaps beyond that to the United States Supreme Court. No matter what the outcome, the point at issue will be Frank Hague against the "Reds," and not the people of New Jersey against Hague's corruption. He knows that the value of his wild accusations lies in their power to confuse, to screen and to provide material for street-corner emotional debate that is far more exciting than the factual details of any crooked political deal.

This knowledge may account for the star witness's arrogance on the stand. He is making a fool of himself, and it must hurt his very considerable personal pride if he knows how many people (with the exception of the readers of The New York Sun which dutifully cleans up his grammar in the trial transcriptions) are laughing at his gutter English. Even so, his position as boss of Jersey City probably seems safe enough to him, and as long as they are asking questions only about permits, parades and his definition of a Communist, Hague doesn't have to explain a lot more embarrassing charges.

For the time being he does not have to explain how, with an annual salary of $8,000, he has been able to spend $400,000 on property during the past seven years or how he manages to maintain simultaneously his mansion at Deal, New Jersey, his lavish apartment in Jersey City and his suite at the Waldorf-Astoria in New York. He does not have to answer the charges that, in some cases, more votes are recorded in his elections than the entire probable electorate; that inhabitants of insane asylums, non-residents and people on their deathbeds are listed as voting; that single individuals have been allowed to vote as many as 135 times. He need not account for the tremendous overpayments for land in Hudson County to be used for public buildings—in one case an excess of $300,000—or for the $9,000,000 extra the state had to pay for the Pulaski three-mile skyway across the Jersey meadows. Nobody is asking why Jersey City's tax rate has trebled in twenty years, why the budget has increased 450 percent, assessments doubled and the debt increased 500 percent. Hague can keep quiet about bribes given or accepted, about protestors silenced through intimidation or through the simple expedient of giving them fat city jobs. As long as the law contents itself with

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minor attacks on his policy of deporting "Reds," he must be fairly well satisfied.

Up until now he has had an additional source of comfort in the attitude of the two most important organizations he represents, the Catholic Church and the Democratic National Party. The support the first of these groups has given Mayor Hague is not surprising. We are growing accustomed to the spectacle of the Church's hierarchy lending its powerful sanction and blessing to reaction and despotism in every corner of the world. Jersey City is 60-to-70-percent Catholic. For two decades its clergy have carefully maintained their friendship with the Hague machine. No one can expect them to repudiate the Mayor now, when he joins with them in their chorus of fanatical hate against communism.

Meanwhile, from Jim Farley's pragmatic point of view, Frank Hague is a good Democrat. His machine turns out the democratic vote with unparalleled efficiency and, if his view is no longer than his nose, this may be all the national chairman can ask from one of his national vice-chairmen. There is no other theory on which to explain President's Roosevelt's willingness to regard the Thomas-O'Connell-Bernard expulsions as "purely local" affairs. Even if the assumption is correct that Farley is coldly measuring votes to be gained against votes to be lost, it is hard to believe that he has given sufficient weight to the unanimous hostility of the CIO and the dismay he is causing among rank-and-file Democrats all over the country.

In the order of their immediacy, the factors that are likely to push Frank Hague off his little throne are these: the structural and financial collapse of his political machine, desertion by the national Democratic Party, and the thrust of the CIO (in which should be included the court battle he is just beginning).

There is solid ground for hope that Hague's grotesquely expensive machine will crack up long before anyone has had a chance to smash it. The Census Bureau of the Department of Commerce lists Jersey City's net bonded debt at $93,317,513, a figure ten times greater than that of other cities of comparable size. And the prospects are that this year Jersey City government will cost $10,000,000 more than it takes in. Municipal bankruptcy could easily prove fatal to the Hague regime. In addition there are more and more reports of hatred and opposition among lesser political lights in the Hague hierarchy on whose aspirations he has trampled. Several ward leaders are known to be waiting for the first safe moment to stage an open revolt. Similarly opposition is growing in the ranks of the A. F. of L. associations, the Central Labor Union and the Hudson County Building Trades Council, which have hitherto been willing to play along in the fight against the CIO. If Hague runs short of the money needed to keep these dissident elements quiet and unorganized, his race is run.

The Democratic Party could do a good job of cleaning Hague out, but the mumbling inaction of its leadership to date shows it has no inclination to do so. As soon as the President decides Hague has gone on long enough—and in view of Mr. Roosevelt's often expressed convictions it is hard to see how he can delay that decision much longer—he can swing into action a powerful, triple-edged attack. First, Hague can be removed from his position in the high command, cut off from federal patronage and stripped of whatever prestige his vice-chairmanship carries within his state. Second, the Department of Justice can proceed with its investigation which, theoretically, is already under way. And finally the La Follette Civil Liberties Committee, or some other congressional investigation, can rip into Hague's huge inventory of skeletons in political closets. Action on these three fronts is already overdue.

Organized labor, if it fights painstakingly, first, through the courts, second, through the gradual extension of its membership and third, through its ability to bring Hague's scandals to public attention, can probably beat the Jersey City machine in the long run. Perhaps its greatest strength is the uniform determination of its leadership and members that Hague's policies must be beaten. The Mayor, on the witness stand in Newark, grins impishly at the photographers. He makes rash admissions, fights with his own attorneys and mutilates the English language with supreme confidence. If his demeanor is any indication of his state of mind, however, he does not realize the seriousness of this hearing. By itself this case may not be crucial, but it can become so as the first gun in a campaign.

In the five days of testimony that have been heard as this is written Hague has made some damaging admissions. Many of them have been implicit in his actions, but now they are down in black and white, signed and sworn. His definitions of "Communism," "Un-American" and "undesirables" have been masterpieces of confusion. He has declared that he does not believe in civil liberties for anyone "working for the overthrow of the government" and has advocated a concentration camp in Alaska for native radicals—among whom he lumps together people of every possible point of view. He would not allow mass picketing, picketing by people who do not work in the plant or picketing for the purpose of organizing a plant or for a closed shop. He believes he has a legal right to deny speaking permits to Communists or other "undesirables" and to deport them from Jersey City. As for the right of assembly, he proclaims: "If they were high-class citizens and they met in peaceful, orderly manner, why, certainly, they have perfect rights; but if prior to that they were advocating the overthrow of the government, they were dissatisfied with everything that America offered

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to them, why, of course, I don't assume they have any rights."

Frank Hague is certainly not shy about his point of view. In many instances he ignored the advice of counsel and insisted on enlarging upon the details of his crude philosophy. We shall soon know whether this valor has been the better part of wisdom.

BRUCE BLIVEN JR.

Hitler's "Fifth Columns"

ON THAT FATEFUL NIGHT of March 11 when Adolf Hitler ordered his mobilized divisions to invade Austria, the stage had long been set for this last act of the tragedy of an ancient, independent nation. Months before the Führer ordered Chancellor Schuschnigg to come to Berchtesgaden, Hitler's "Fifth Column" in Austria had made a showdown between the Austrian Nazis and their opponents inevitable. They had undermined the Fatherland Front; they had sapped the army's strength and patriotism; they had destroyed the reliability of the police; they were scattered through all government departments; they had even penetrated the Schuschnigg Cabinet. Austrian Nazis could boast that "the army is ours!" This was the background of the Schuschnigg surrender. The ground had been cut from under his feet. He could no longer count on the loyalty of those sworn to uphold their government in Austria. The Nazi "Fifth Column" had made good on its job.

There is today a Nazi "Fifth Column" in every nation which borders Germany, and Hitler has recruited similar units in countries far removed from the "bleeding frontiers" of the Third Reich. It is not surprising to find that there is a powerful Nazi private army in Czechoslovakia, because this "island of democracy" has more than three million Teutons. But one would hardly expect to find Nazi organizations in such democratic and sensible states as Holland and Belgium. Yet there are. Estonia is not contiguous to the Reich, or is Rumania, yet in both these states Hitler has his private military and espionage establishments. When we enumerate the countries in which the Nazis have organized "Fifth Columns," we can call the roll of almost two-thirds of Europe. Even among the South Tyrolese inside Italy's frontier there is a swastika brigade. (Mussolini, please note.) Every nation in Europe has at least the nucleus of a Nazi "Fifth Column."

Konrad Henlein and his Sudetendeutsch Party in Czechoslovakia have been so well publicized that this "General Franco of Bohemia" and his followers are known to be under orders from Hitler. But it is not realized abroad that an increasingly dangerous Nazi "Fifth Column" is being mobilized in Hungary. Whether this hooked-cross legion will be used to overthrow the government, or be made a medium for influencing the government's policies, is uncertain. Perhaps Hitler does not know that himself. If he can gain control of Hungary by what the Nazis call "parliamentary" methods, as he did in Danzig, it will not be necessary to take the risk involved in an armed *Putsch*. But Hungarians like Tibor Eckhardt, who are fighting the advance of the German octopus, have no illusions about the perils inherent in the local situation. Dr. Eckhardt told me a few months ago that the Nazis have thirty-nine newspapers in Hungary. They control such Swabian and Magyar organizations as the Arrow Cross, the Scythe Cross and the NAP. Not only is Hungary the bridge between the Greater Reich and the rich oil reserves of Rumania, but she is an important link in the chain Hitler is winding around Czechoslovakia. Keep your eyes on Hungary.

Across the Rumanian frontier there are ardent young Nazis in the cities of Transylvania and the Banat. These Teutons are descendants of Saxon and Swabian settlers who came there hundreds of years ago. Today, they are the advance guards of the Nazi drive to the East; they are part of the Nazi "Fifth Column" in Rumania. But Hitler is not content to depend upon the Teutonic minority in Rumania. He has subsidized indigenous Fascist organizations such as the notorious Iron Guard and the infamous Cuza-Goga faction. There are other Fascist elements in Rumania, but these are the principal pro-Nazi groups.

Although King Carol's personal dictatorship has driven the green-shirted Iron Guard and the blue-shirted Cuzists underground, they still constitute a state within a state. Codreanu, Führer of the Iron Guard, can boast to his followers: "Time is on our side!" For it is true that one pistol shot in Rumania might topple over the present regime and plunge the country into civil war. Such a development would give Hitler a pretext to intervene in order to "restore order" and "prevent bloodshed," just as he did in Austria. As a result his "Fifth Column" would come into power in the kingdom and the Reich would have the oil and raw materials to enable Hitler to snap his fingers at a maritime blockade of Germany. Meanwhile, Hitler's sixty-odd subsidized newspapers in Rumania continue to sow the seeds of rebellion. It is not without reason that the Nazis claim that they can turn Rumania into "another Spain."

Across Rumania's western frontier, the Nazi "Fifth Column" in Jugoslavia has not fared well. Whenever the police have discovered among the half-million German minority any movement that even resembled Hitler's agitation in Hungary or Rumania, the Serbs have struck and struck hard. Consequently, the young Nazi hotheads in Jugoslavia have lost their enthusiasm for revolutionary activities. Realizing that the Serbs would not permit them to make headway, they have changed their tactics and adopted "parliamentary" methods. Dr. Craft, leader of the Teutonic minority,

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joined the Jugoslav Radical Union, the government party, from which position he can exert influence on government policies. But no matter what method a Nazi "Fifth Column" may use, its objective is the same: to build the empire of Mitteleuropa which Hitler has planned and which his Greater Reich is constructing.

Perhaps the most indefensible example of the streamlined aggression of Nazi imperialism is Hitler's campaign against Denmark. The fact that the Danes treat their German minority with scrupulous fairness makes no difference to the men who rule the Third Reich. Although Denmark refused to accept any territory at Versailles that did not contain a Danish majority, North Schleswig is marked on Nazi maps as the victim of future aggression. Hitler is determined to obtain this small area, but his ambitions go much farther. All of Denmark figures in the Nazi plotting. For industrious Denmark has food that hungry Germans could eat. This democratic little kingdom is what the Nazis call a "war pantry." Furthermore, the Jutland Peninsula could serve as an advance base for submarine and air attacks against England. If the Führer held Denmark, he could close the entrance to the Baltic. Denmark has an important place in the Nazi campaign for world power. Consequently, Hitler's "Fifth Column" in Denmark is preparing for *der Tag*.

The common denominator of the programs of the Nazi "Fifth Columns" is anti-Semitism. It may be Dr. Lens Moeller's party stirring up trouble in Denmark, Henleinists rioting in Bohemia, the Teutonic groups plotting in the Baltic States, or the Nazi elements agitating in Switzerland, Holland and Belgium. In each case racialism generates the hatred that drives the swastika legions along the path of brown-shirt imperialism. Wherever Hitler is ready to carry out his next act of aggression, his "Fifth Column" within the victim's borders will have prepared the way for the entrance of the Führer's field-gray divisions. Hitler's Austrian "Fifth Column" has shown the way.

HENRY C. WOLFE

Corporative Prose[1]

FOR SEVERAL YEARS our great magazines of mass literature have been changing themselves over violently. Some old familiar friends of the family have died, in the process of having their faces lifted, to be replaced by more stridently ambitious newcomers; while others have reappeared, with streamlined neon-lighted store fronts. The period of upheaval in the magazine section of the press during the 1930's recalls the storm which struck the newspaper world after the World War, when the tabloids were first invented. Expert opinion holds that the popular magazines, which reach an audience of some ten million readers, have been moving heaven and earth to find ways of competing more effectively with the newer Pleasure Industries: the radio and the movies. This is one implication of a remarkable report on the changing magazine market (from the professional writer's point of view), by Mr. Silas Bent, in the Authors' League Bulletin for May, 1938. The flood of picture magazines and the new luxurious jobs, freighted with voluptuous drawings, according to Mr. Bent, show an intensely organized effort to purvey *selected* sensations for an audience whose mental age and outlook has been most carefully (and cynically) charted in advance.

But most impressive of all has been the increasingly ruthless efficiency that has been spreading among the half-dozen large publishing corporations that fill most of the wants of the magazine public. Formerly, in publishing, much depended upon the personality of writers, upon their capacity to interest the public; nowadays, the technicians of magazine-making count no more upon a writer's temperament than does the producing staff of a motion-picture studio. The object is to leave as little as possible to chance, passion or the accidents of individuality, and depend as much as possible upon controlling in advance, upon coördinating the whole process of writing-publishing as a *corporative* effort.

I do not speak here of the policy or philosophy of these publishing corporations—that is another story—but of their technique, method and style. The new order of the day is that efficiency, Taylorism and high-pressure "merchandising," in the magazine, are to bring about the elimination of personal style and its replacement with what we may call a *corporative* style.

The gentlemen of the press, especially when they had no by-line, were always supposed to work under the discipline of their organ and not indulge in flights of policy of their own. However, in compensation, their friends or constant readers could always recognize the flavor of their style, whether in the columns of Mr. Greeley's Tribune or Mr. Dana's Sun. But in the case of at least two highly successful and otherwise very ably conducted magazines of today, the distinguishing feature has been not only the suppression of signed contributions, but the exploitation of a uniform "house" style, so that from week to week or month to month their product has been of a standardized expression, a sort of hall-marked literary mer-

[1] This is the substance of a talk given before the American Booksellers' Association, in New York City, on May 24, 1938.

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chandise, as unvarying in its quality as a given brand of cigarettes or toilet soap.

Here is the triumph of big business and the mass-production method in popular literature. It is as if to say: "Our brand of merchandise is always fresh from the factory, uniform in quality and may be recognized at once by its distinctive package." It is unquestionably designed also to pass the "blindfold" test.

Let us try our own puzzle contest.

From what weekly magazine are the following items taken (with italics of our own, to make the game easier)?

Industriously in London last week, *solid, bull-necked* French Premier Edouard Daladier and *lean, hawk-nosed* British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain did their potent best to spoil the grandiose State visit which *pudgy, mystic* Adolf Hitler was to make to Italy this week, escorted by a retinue of 170 German officials, plus 70 German editors, plus 84 German photographers.

First out at the White House Door was *hatless* Edsel Ford. Behind trotted *stooped but spry*, Henry Ford. . . .

Into New Orleans last week on an "unofficial" mission of great importance *bowed goggling little Kaju Nakamura*, U.S.-educated professional Japanese glad-hander, one-time member of the Japanese Imperial Diet.

The reader has guessed by now. He has noticed that the sentence structure here all leans in the same way, that the subject is always in inverted order, giving the hurried, breathless staccato accent long characteristic of the magazine in question, a style based on that of a radio announcer broadcasting from a football stadium in a high wind.

Another distinguishing mark of the same corporation's style is an extreme, telegraphic compression or crowding of detail, often in defiance of sense, connection and syntax, as in the following specimen:

"Vive l'Amérique!" "Vive monsieur le President!" echoed in the cobbled streets as Mr. Hoover, accompanied S. Pinkney Tuck, today U. S. Embassy Counsellor at Brussels and in Paris often host to the Duchess of Windsor when she was Mrs. Simpson, drove into Lille.

Still another trademark is the abundance of compound words, pat phrases and neologisms, such as "jam-packed," "cinemactor," "radioration" and "newshawk."

It is true that language is a living thing, continually renovated by drawings upon the vernacular. Imaginative stevedores and farmhands and peasants of Times Square create language out of their emotion. When this has been sifted slowly by people who have instinct or trained taste for verbal imagery or onomatopœia, the new words are deposited in the language permanently. One enjoys the discoveries of Variety, Walter Winchell and, in part, of H. L. Mencken. But the crudely synthetic neologisms produced by boards of directors at advertising agencies for new industrial products are usually shunned by the living language; and much of our journalism today, written according to house formulas of style, is vastly irritating because of a similar lack of taste.

Heaven preserve us from trying to call back the old carriage days of writing; I wish to state a condition, as Grover Cleveland used to say, and not a theory. To estimate the upheavals that have taken place in our magazine world, we need only look back a generation to a time when fairly popular magazines published serially the novels of Henry James. Or further back, some two centuries ago, in London, there was The Rambler, which thousands of literate persons used to buy simply in order to enjoy contact with a distinct, human personality (not a synthetic or corporate one), Samuel Johnson, who certainly wrote in his own natural, Johnsonian way. What would the irascible Dr. Johnson, or for that matter Henry James, have said if he were invited to write every week for Bingo, Inc., in the standard, patented Bingo, Inc., style? And yet I have heard that boys and girls of tender age, drawn from our leading universities, are brought into such organizations, and whatever else they may have aspired to do—they may have dreamed of being Jane Austens or Henry Jameses—are ordered and drilled to write in the famous corporate style.

Then, there are the Formula Boys. Several months ago a new and elaborate venture in mass literature was being launched, and the editors sent out in advance a form circular to writers inviting them to contribute articles. This circular was a complete prescription, giving the method of approach, style and point of view for the "debunking" articles desired, by which all men must write for the new magazine. The thought that came forcibly to mind was: why could not a robot be invented to turn out the prescribed copy like so many bolts of cloth? Or a slot machine?

I have heard also of a great national magazine whose editorial staff sends out plots in synopsis to authors, specifying only that some covering of flesh, drapery and dialogue be provided.

Thus popular literature in magazine form—the form in which the immense majority of literate Americans take their reading—is now pre-fabricated according to the specifications of several large-scale publishing concerns. Individual effort or temperament is replaced by corporate discipline created through "consultation"; the personal contribution by an anonymous and composite one. The whole process smells of the factory. And inevitably the corporation as writer and philosopher tends to be bureaucratic, avoiding departures, holding to its beaten track, refusing as long as possible to change its well tried formulas. Standard murder, standard love, standard confessions, standard digests of Einstein, and standardized sensations generally, go speeding out on time toward a nationwide network of newsstands and ten million readers.

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Save for the medium of book publishing, still individualistic, "inefficient" or small-scale in its methods of distribution, the field of popular literature is becoming more and more highly organized every day, like other large industries. For readers who have undergone a certain education, few surprises are offered; and there are diminishing returns. The writer meanwhile may take his choice. Something like that between a Ford and a Chevrolet.

MATTHEW JOSEPHSON

Justice to Edith Wharton

BEFORE Edith Wharton died, the more commonplace work of her later years had had the effect of dulling the reputation of her earlier and more serious work. It seemed to me that the notices elicited by her death did her, in general, something less than justice; and I want to try to throw into relief the achievements which did make her important during a period—say, 1905-1917—when there were few American writers worth reading. This article is therefore no very complete study, but rather in the nature of an impression by a reader who was growing up at that time.

Mrs. Wharton's earliest fiction I never found particularly interesting. The influences of Paul Bourget and Henry James seem to have presided at the birth of her talent; and I remember these stories as dealing with the artificial moral problems of Bourget and developing them with the tenuity of analysis which is what is least satisfactory in James. The stories tended to take place either in a social void or against a background of Italy or France which had somewhat the character of expensive upholstery. It was only with "The House of Mirth," published in 1905, that Edith Wharton emerged as a historian of the American society of her time. For a period of fifteen years or more, she produced work of considerable interest both for its realism and its intensity.

One has heard various accounts of her literary beginnings. She tells us in her autobiography that a novel which she had composed at eleven and which began, "Oh, how do you do, Mrs. Brown? . . . If only I had known you were going to call, I should have tidied up the drawing room"—had been returned by her mother with the chilling comment, "Drawing-rooms are always tidy." And it is said that a book of verse which she had written and had had secretly printed was discovered and destroyed by her parents, well-to-do New Yorkers of merchant stock, who thought it unladylike for a young woman to write. It seems to be an authentic fact, though Mrs. Wharton does not mention it in her memoirs, that she first seriously began to write fiction after her marriage during the period of a nervous breakdown. It had been the suggestion of Dr. S. Weir Mitchell, who himself combined the practice of literature with pioneer work in the field of female neuroses. Thereafter she seems to have leaned on her writing for support in a situation which became more and more painful with the years. Her husband, as she tells us, had some mental disease which became worse from the first years of their marriage, and he inhabited a social world of the rich which was sealed tight to intellectual interests. Through her writing, she came gradually into relation with the international literary world and made herself a partially independent career.

Her work was then the desperate product of a pressure of maladjustments; and it very soon took a direction totally different from that of Henry James, as a lesser disciple of whom she is sometimes pointlessly listed. James's interests were predominantly esthetic: he is never a passionate social prophet; and only rarely—as in "The Ivory Tower," which seems in turn to have derived from Mrs. Wharton—does he satirize plutocratic America. But a passionate social prophet is precisely what Edith Wharton became. At her strongest and most characteristic, she is a brilliant example of the writer who relieves an emotional strain by denouncing his generation.

It is true that she combines with indignation against a specific phase of American society a general sense of inexorable doom for humanity. She was much haunted by the myth of the Eumenides; and she had developed her own deadly version of the working of the Aeschylean necessity—a version as automatic and rapid, as decisive and as undimmed by sentiment, as the mechanical and financial processes which, during her lifetime, were transforming her New York. In these books, she was as pessimistic as Hardy or Maupassant. You find the pure expression of her hopelessness in her volume of poems, "Artemis to Actaeon," published in 1909, which, for all its hard accent and its ponderous tone, its "impenetrables" and "incommunicables" and "incommensurables," its "immemorial altitudes august," was not entirely without interest or merit. "Death, can it be the years shall naught avail?" she asks in one of the sonnets called "Experience": "'Not so,' Death answered. 'They shall purchase sleep.'" And in the poem called "Moonrise over Tyringham," apostrophizing the first hour of night, she seems to mark the emergence from a crisis:

> Be thou the image of a thought that fares
> Forth from itself, and flings its ray ahead,

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Leaping the barriers of ephemeral cares,
To where our lives are but the ages' tread,

And let this year be, not the last of youth,
But first—like thee!—of some new train of hours,
If more remote from hope, yet nearer truth,
And kin to the unpetitionable powers.

But the catastrophe in Edith Wharton's novels is almost invariably the upshot of a conflict between the individual and the social group. Her tragic heroines and heroes are the victims of the group pressure of convention; they are passionate or imaginative spirits, hungry for emotional and intellectual experience, locked into a small closed system and destroying themselves by beating their heads against their prison or suffering a living death in resigning themselves to it. Out of these themes she got a sharp pathos all her own. The language and some of the machinery of "The House of Mirth" seem old-fashioned and rather melodramatic today; but the book had some originality and power, with its chronicle of a social parasite on the fringes of the very rich dragging out a stupefying routine of week-ends, yachting trips and dinners, and finding a window open only twice, at the beginning and at the end of the book, on a world where all the values were not money values.

"The Fruit of the Tree," which followed it in 1907, although its characters are concerned with larger problems, is less successful than "The House of Mirth," because it is confused between two different kinds of themes. There is a more or less trumped-up moral problem *à la* Bourget about a "mercy killing" by a high-minded trained nurse, who happened to have an "affinity" with the husband of the patient. But there is also the story of an industrial reformer, which is on the whole quite ably handled—especially in the opening scenes, in which the hero, assistant manager of a textile mill, is aroused by an industrial accident to try to remove the conditions which have caused it and finds himself up against one of those tight family combinations which often dominate factory towns, enthroned in their red-satin drawing-rooms amid heavy bronze chandeliers hanging from high ceilings, massively upholstered sofas, high carved mantelpieces surmounted by bronze obelisk-shaped clocks, framed canvases of the Hudson in Autumn, and bronze Indians on velvet pedestals, and velvet-covered writing-tables with empty inkstands of Venetian ormolu; and in its picture of his marriage with the mill-owning widow and the gradual drugging of his purpose under the influence of a house on Long Island of a quality more gracious and engaging but on an equally overpowering scale.

Edith Wharton had come to have a great hand with all kinds of American furnishings and with their concomitant landscape-gardening. Her first book had been a work on interior decorating; and now in her novels she adopts the practice of inventorying the contents of American houses. Only Clyde Fitch in those early nineteen-hundreds made play to the same degree with the miscellaneous material objects with which Americans were surrounding themselves, the things which had just been manufactured and which people had just bought. I suppose that no other writer of comedies of any other place or time had depended so much for his effects on stage sets and, especially, on stage properties: the radiators that bang in "Girls," the artificial orange in "The Truth," the things that are dropped under the table by the ladies in the second act of "The Climbers." But in the case of Edith Wharton, the *décors* become the agents of tragedy. The characters of Clyde Fitch are embarrassed or tripped up by these articles; but the characters of Edith Wharton are pursued by them as by spirits of doom and ultimately crushed by their accumulation. These pieces have not been always made newly: sometimes they are *objets d'art*, which have been expensively imported from Europe. But the effect is very much the same: they are something extraneous to the people and, no matter how old they may be, they seem to glitter and clank with the coin that has gone to buy them. A great many of Mrs. Wharton's descriptions are, of course, satiric or caustic; but when she wants to produce an impression of real magnificence, and even when she is writing about Europe, the thing still seems rather synthetic. She was not only one of the great pioneers, but also the poet, of interior decoration.

In "The Custom of the Country" (1913), Mrs. Wharton's next novel about the rich—"The Reef" is a relapse into "psychological problems"—she piles up the new luxury of the era to an altitude of ironic grandeur, like the glass mountain in the "Arabian Nights," which the current of her imagination manages to make incandescent. The first scene sets the key for the whole book:

Mrs. Spragg and her visitor were enthroned in two heavy gilt armchairs in one of the private drawing-rooms of the Hotel Stentorian. The Spragg rooms were known as one of the Looey suites, and the drawing-room walls, above their wainscoting of highly varnished mahogany, were hung with salmon-pink damask and adorned with oval portraits of Marie Antoinette and the Princess de Lamballe. In the center of the florid carpet a gilt table with a top of Mexican onyx sustained a palm in a gilt basket tied with a pink bow. But for this ornament, and a copy of "The Hound of the Baskervilles" which lay beside it, the room showed no traces of human use, and Mrs. Spragg herself wore as complete an air of detachment as if she had been a wax figure in a show-window.

In the last pages—the scene is one of the best things of its kind that Edith Wharton did—Undine Spragg's little boy is seen wandering alone amid the splendors of the Paris *hôtel* which has crowned his mother's progress from the Stentorian: "the white fur rugs and brocade chairs" which "seemed maliciously on the watch for smears and ink-spots," "his mother's wonderful

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lacy bedroom, all pale silks and velvets, artful mirrors and veiled lamps, and the boudoir as big as a drawing-room, with pictures he would have liked to know about, and tables and cabinets holding things he was afraid to touch," the library, with its "rows and rows of books, bound in dim browns and golds, and old faded reds as rich as velvet: they all looked as if they might have had stories in them as splendid as their bindings. But the bookcases were closed with gilt trellising, and when Paul reached up to open one, a servant told him that Mr. Moffatt's secretary kept them locked because the books were too valuable to be taken down."

It is a vein which Sinclair Lewis has worked since—as in the opening pages of "Babbitt," where Babbitt is shown entangled with his gadgets; and in other respects "The Custom of the Country" opens up the way for Lewis. Mrs. Wharton has already arrived at a method of doing crude and harsh people with a draughtsmanship crude and harsh. Undine Spragg, the social-climbing divorcée to whom none of her personal relationships means anything human, is a monster, but quite a successful caricature of a type who has gone even farther since. She is the prototype in fiction of the "gold-digger," of the international cocktail bitch. Here the pathos has been largely subordinated to an implacable animosity toward her heroine; but there is one episode not only bitter but poignant, in which a discarded husband of Undine's, who has been driven by her demands to work in Wall Street and left by her up to his neck in debt, goes home to Washington Square through "the heat, the noise, the smells of disheveled midsummer" New York, mounts to the room at the top of the house where he has kept his books and other things from college and shoots himself there.

The other side of this world of wealth, which annihilates every impulse toward excellence, is a poverty which also annihilates. The writer of one of the recent notices on Mrs. Wharton's death was mistaken in assuming that "Ethan Frome" was her only excursion outside the top social strata. It is true that she knew the top strata better than she knew anything else; but both in "The House of Mirth" and "The Fruit of the Tree," she is always aware of the pit of misery which is implied by the wastefulness of the plutocracy, and the horror or the fear of this pit is one of the forces that determine the action. There is a Puritan in Edith Wharton, and this Puritan is always insisting that we must face the unpleasant and the ugly. Not to do so is one of the worst sins in her morality; sybarites like Mr. Langhope in "The Fruit of the Tree," amusing himself with a dilettante archeology on his income from a badly managed factory, like the fatuous mother of "Twilight Sleep," who feels so safe with her facial massage and her Yogi, while her family goes to hell under her nose, are among the characters whom she treats with most scorn. And the three novels I have touched on above were paralleled by another series—"Ethan Frome," "Bunner Sisters" and "Summer"—which dealt with *milieux* of a different kind.

"Ethan Frome" is still much read and well known; but "Bunner Sisters" has been undeservedly neglected. It is the last piece in the volume called "Xingu" (1916), a short novel about the length of "Ethan Frome." This story of two small shopkeepers on Stuyvesant Square and a drug-addict clockmaker from Hoboken, involved in a relationship like a triple noose which will gradually choke them all is one of the most terrible things that Edith Wharton ever wrote; and the last page, on which the surviving sister, her life-long companion gone and her poor little business lost, sets out to look for a job, seems to mark the grimmest moment of Edith Wharton's darkest years. Here is not even the grandeur of the heroic New England hills: "'Ain't you going to leave the *ad*-dress?' the young woman called out after her. Ann Eliza went out into the thronged street. The great city, under the fair spring sky, seemed to throb with the stir of innumerable beginnings. She walked on, looking for another shop window with a sign in it."

"Summer" (1917), however, returns to the Massachusetts of "Ethan Frome," and, though neither so harrowing nor quite so vivid, is not so very far inferior to it. Making hats in a millinery shop was the abyss from which Lily Bart recoiled; the heroine of "Summer" recoils from the nethermost American stratum, the degenerate "mountain people." Let down by the refined young man who works in the public library and wants to become an architect, very much in the manner of the heroine of Dreiser's "American Tragedy," she finds that she cannot go back to her own people and allows herself to be made an honest woman of by the rather admirable old failure of a lawyer who had brought her down from the mountain in her childhood. It is the first sign on Mrs. Wharton's part of a relenting in the cruelty of her endings. "Come to my age," says Charity Royall's protector, "a man knows the things that matter and the things that don't; that's about the only good turn life does us." Her blinding bitterness is already subsiding.

But in the meantime, before "Summer" was written, she had escaped from the hopeless situation created by the mental disease of her husband. He had been steadily growing worse; but she had had difficulty in inducing his family to allow her to leave him with an attendant. The situation in "Bunner Sisters" is obviously a transposition of this; and the relief of the tension in "Summer" is evidently the result of her new freedom. She was at last finally detached from her marriage; and she took up her permanent residence in France. The War came, and she threw herself into its activities.

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And now the intensity dies from her work as the American background fades. One can see this already in "Summer," and "The Age of Innocence" (1920) is really Edith Wharton's valedictory. The theme is closely related to those of "The House of Mirth" and "Ethan Frome": the frustration of a potential pair of lovers by social or domestic obstructions. But setting it back in the generation of her parents, she is able to contemplate it without quite the same rancor, to soften its sharpness with a poetic mist of distance. Yet even here the old impulse of protest still makes itself felt as the main motive. If we compare "The Age of Innocence" to Henry James's "The Europeans," whose central situation it reproduces, the pupil's divergence from the master is seen in the most striking way. In both cases, a Europeanized American woman—Baroness Münster, Countess Olenska—returns to the United States to intrude upon and to disturb the existence of a conservative provincial society; in both cases, she attracts and almost captivates a genuinely superior man of the community who turns out to be unable, in the long run, to muster enough courage to take her, and finally allows her to return to Europe. Henry James makes of all this a balanced comedy of the cosmopolitan and the Boston point of view (as he reproached her with not having developed the theme of Undine Spragg's marriage with a French nobleman in terms of French and American manners, as he had done with a similar one in "The Reverberator"); but in Edith Wharton's version one still feels an active resentment against the pusillanimity of the provincial group and also, as in other of her books, a special complaint against the timid American male who has let the lady down.

Up through "The Age of Innocence," and recurring at all points of her range from "The House of Mirth" to "Ethan Frome," the typical masculine figure in Edith Wharton's fiction is a man set apart from his neighbors by education, sensibility and intelligence, but lacking the force or the courage either to impose himself or to get away. She generalizes about this type in the form in which she knew it best in her autobiographical volume: "They combined a cultivated taste with marked social gifts," but "their weakness was that, save in a few cases, they made so little use of their ability," but were content to "live in dilettantish leisure," rendering none of "the public services that a more enlightened social system would have exacted of them." But she had described a very common phenomenon of the America of after the Civil War. Lawrence Selden, the city lawyer, who sits comfortably in his bachelor apartment with his flower-box of mignonette and his beautifully bound La Bruyère and allows Lily Bart to drown, is the same person as Lawyer Royall of "Summer" with his lofty orations and his drunken lapses. One could have found him during the big-business era in almost any American city or town: the superior man, with natural instincts toward self-improvement and independence, more or less rendered helpless by the surf of headlong money-making and spending which carried him along with its breakers or left him stranded on the abandoned New England hills, in either case thwarted and stunted by the level of a middle-class community. In Edith Wharton's novels these men tend to be dominated by determined women of conventional morals and middle-class ideals; when an exceptional woman comes along who is thirsting for something different and better, the man is unable to give it to her. This special situation Edith Wharton, with some conscious historical criticism but chiefly impelled by a feminine animus, has dramatized with much vividness and intelligence. But there are no first-rate men in her novels.

"The Age of Innocence" is already rather faded. But now a surprising lapse occurs. (It is true that she was now nearly sixty.)

When we look back on Mrs. Wharton's career, it seems that everything that is valuable in her work lies within a quite sharply delimited area—between "The House of Mirth" and "The Age of Innocence." It is sometimes true of women writers—less often, I believe, of men—that a manifestation of something like genius may be stimulated by some exceptional emotional strain, but will disappear when the stimulus has passed. With a man, his professional, his artisan's life, is likely to persist as a force in itself through the vicissitudes of his emotional experience. Henry James in a virtual vacuum continued to possess and develop his *métier* up to his very last years. But Mrs. Wharton had no *métier* in this sense. With her emergence from her life in the United States, her settling down in the congenial society of Paris, she seems at last to become comfortably adjusted; and with her adjustment, the real intellectual force which she has exerted through a decade and a half evaporates suddenly and completely. She no longer maims or massacres her characters. Her grimness melts rapidly into benignity. She takes an interest in young people's problems, in the solicitude of parents for children; she smooths over the misunderstandings of lovers; she sees how things may work out well enough. She even loses the style she has mastered. Beginning with a language rather ponderous and stiff, the worst features of the style of Henry James and a stream of clichés from old plays and novels, she finally—about the time of "Ethan Frome"—worked out a prose of flexible steel, bright as electric light and striking out sparks of color and wit, which has the quality and pace of New York and is one of its distinctive artistic products. But now not merely does she cease to be brilliant, she becomes almost commonplace.

"The Glimpses of the Moon," which followed "The Age of Innocence," is, as someone has said, scarcely

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distinguishable from the ordinary serial in a woman's magazine; and indeed it is in the women's magazines that Mrs. Wharton's novels now begin first to appear. "A Son at the Front" is a little better, because it had been begun in 1918 and had her war experience in it, with some of her characteristic cutting satire at the expense of the belligerents behind the lines. It is not bad as a limited picture of middle-aged civilians during the War—though not so good as Arnold Bennett's "The Pretty Lady."

"Old New York" was a much feebler second boiling from the tea-leaves of "The Age of Innocence." I have read only one of Mrs. Wharton's novels written since "Old New York": "Twilight Sleep," which is not so bad as her worst, but suffers seriously as a picture of New York during the middle nineteen-twenties from the author's long absence abroad. She is no longer up on her interior-decorating—though there are some characteristic passages of landscape-gardening: " 'Seventy-five thousand bulbs this year!' she thought as the motor swept by the sculptured gateway, just giving and withdrawing a flash of turf sheeted with amber and lilac, in a setting of twisted and scalloped evergreens."

The two books of hers which I *have* read since then —"The Art of Fiction" (which, however, does contain an excellent essay on Proust) and the volume of memoirs called "A Backward Glance"—I found rather disappointing. There is almost nothing even worth glancing at in "A Backward Glance" except a portrait of Henry James: entertaining but slightly catty and curiously superficial. She tells us nothing much of interest about herself and makes amends to her New York antecedents for her irony of "The Age of Innocence" by presenting them in tinted miniatures, completely remote and unreal. It is the last irony of "The Age of Innocence" that Newland Archer should become reconciled to "old New York." "After all," he came to tell himself, "there was good in the old ways." Something like this seems to have happened to Edith Wharton. Even in "A Backward Glance," she confesses that "the weakness of the social structure" of her parents' generation had been "a blind dread of innovation"; but her later works show a dismay and a shrinking before what seemed to her the social and moral chaos of an age which was battering down the old edifice that she herself had once depicted as a prison. Perhaps, after all, the old mismated couples who had remained married in deference to the decencies were better than the new divorced who were no longer aware of any obligations at all.

The only thing that does survive in "A Backward Glance" is some trace of the tremendous blue-stocking that Mrs. Wharton was in her prime. The deep reverence for the heroes of art and thought—though she always believed that Paul Bourget was one of them—of the woman who in earlier days had written a long blank-verse poem about Vesalius still makes itself felt in these reminiscences. Her culture was rather heavy and grand—a preponderance of Goethe and Schiller, Racine and La Bruyère—but it was remarkably solid for an American woman and vitally related to her life. And she was one of the few Americans of her day who cared enough about serious literature to take the risks of trying to make some contribution to it. Charles Eliot Norton—who, as she remarks, had so admirably translated Dante—once warned her that "no great work of the imagination" had "ever been based on illicit passion." She had the right to protest—even with contemptuous complaints that the writers of the later generation had "abandoned creative art for pathology" —that she had "fought hard . . . to turn the wooden dolls" of the conventional fiction of her time "into struggling, suffering human beings." She had herself been one of the few such human beings in the America of the early nineteen hundreds who had found a voice and left a record.

EDMUND WILSON

Community of Butterflies

The ground shimmers
Like water and is blue as sky
With their wings resting—
And now they fly:

Brother and brother and brother
Float and fly:
Each one's circle blowing
In the other's way.

Brother and brother and brother
In no more tenderness,
No more to one another
Than blade to blade of grass,

But so intensely holding
The flight together:
Theirs are not separate wings,
But this is winged ether.

Gopher and Mole

These tunnelers by whom the lawns are deviled
Only as goers underground are pair.
Gopher will quit his mine and climb his mound.
A shaking weed tuft in a windless field,
A tall blade falling on a tall blade leveled,
Lets me surprise a gopher out of ground.

But mole goes dark and never friend of air.
I may not see him alive. Twice I have found
Moles strangely dead, unscarred and undisheveled,
On frosty paths, no sign how they came there,
The little buried eyes as stiff as glass
And the fur with a fine polish to every hair.

MARIE DE L. WELCH

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Shoot the Works

With the Guild in Toronto

MEN AND WOMEN who write do not seem to be articulate. At least not newspaper men and women. This is written from Toronto where the American Newspaper Guild is holding its fifth annual convention. The ANG is no longer a baby union, but the present session has not brought out any very great amount of exchange of opinion on the floor. This is written by the person who at the moment is sitting as chairman of the gathering. He keeps his fingers crossed, since by the time this article appears, if and when, all hell may have broken loose.

And from his point of view that would be a trial and a tribulation. Reporters and men and women in the commercial departments of the newspaper craft are great comma hunters. It is always possible to get a pretty lively discussion on the shading of words. For instance the best Guild debate up to date has been on the problem as to whether the delegates should go on record as believing that "most," "much" or "some" of the American press is definitely unfair in its presentation of labor news. "Most" won the day.

The Guild from its inception has warred against the tradition of Richard Harding Davis and the individualistic genius. Some progress has been made. Most of us are willing to admit that we can hardly pretend to any greater distinction than the assertion that we may be skilled craftsmen. Nevertheless, newspaper employees, in convention assembled, waste a vast amount of time in frivolous and technical detail. Salvation may lie in broadening the base of membership. It is possible that the men and women in the commercial departments may furnish better leadership than can come from those who are still afflicted with the sneaking suspicion that a marshal's baton is included in their kits.

One year ago the Guild decided in St. Louis to strengthen itself by asking employees of the business office, the advertising office and the circulation departments to climb on board. One of the chief arguments against this proposal was the contention that groups which were potentially more numerous would seize control and leave reporters out in the cold. Up to now this remains a fallacy. The tradition of the romantic reporter has been imposed upon his fellows by fiction, motion pictures and word of mouth. During the session in Toronto only two delegates from the newer groups arose and both spoke briefly and with an obvious show of embarrassment. This of course is not within the intention or the hope of Guild leadership. By now there is general agreement that all persons on the same payroll have a common interest.

Toronto did underline an ANG conviction which has not been stressed sufficiently. The charge has been made that in attempting to shorten working hours and raise minimum standards the newspaper trade union was warring against the ideals of the craft. This is not justified. The Guild actually has moved and is moving to establish higher standards of competence. Newspaper owners are entirely correct in saying that if a provision is put over for a sharp step-up in minimum pay for the news writer of three years' experience, certain employees may be dropped. The Guild knows that. The thought of the Guild is that those who have no particular flair for journalism should be cut off at the outset rather than when they have grown gray and useless in meager jobs.

There are many points upon which publishers and their employees should quite logically agree. The "freedom of the press" is one of those points. And in Toronto the Guild passed unanimously a resolution in which all intelligent editors ought to concur. This is the resolution:

"Working newspaper men and women have always had a vital interest in the freedom of the press. Without freedom of honest expression our jobs may be shameful. We want to have the privilege of telling the truth as we see it. And so the Guild continues to war against any kind of censorship. But if the freedom of the press comes to mean no more than the right of a newspaper owner to print that news which pleases him and to spike important occurrences which irk him, then 'freedom' may be a fine word that has lost its savor. And we are discussing a fact and not a theory. The Guild stands for freedom of the press and it also stands for that principle which gives vitality to freedom. We urge a recognition and a support of all organized efforts to preserve the integrity of the news. The wells of information must not be poisoned."

The Toronto convention did not break into any brand-new ground. The delegates reëlected the national officers. But in so doing there was no apparent suggestion that this endorsement had anything in particular to do with the personalities of the men concerned. It was rather a recognition of the fact that even one or two of the inept may take on the stature of symbols. By now Guild members are aware of the fact that the organization is vastly more important than any individual. No single one stands out as vitally essential. If he or she will suffice that is good enough.

Every Guild convention fights over again the battle of Gettysburg. In spite of precedent there are always those who rise to say that reporters should take no position whatsoever on economics and politics. And yet five times the men and women who report the news have decided that it should be their privilege once a year to assume briefly an editorial attitude.

One interesting phase of the Toronto convention was the fact that for the first time a cleric sat as a duly elected delegate. Father Dowling, the editor of a Catholic weekly in St. Louis, came as a representative from that city. He served as chairman at one session and was also a member of the Legislative Committee, whose report in the past has been a bone of contention. In Toronto the support of progressive policies was not challenged by a single delegate.

The Guild grows older. And as it matures it seems that there is an increasing acceptance of the theory that the working newspaper man and woman of the United States is a part of the national labor movement. By crossing the border some emphasis was put upon the fact that the organization is international in its scope. And this was further augmented by declarations on world affairs.

Your correspondent was keenly in sympathy with these actions. He feels that the men and women who make the news cannot consistently say that they are neutral as to the tides which they loose.

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Under Fascist dictatorship the reporter is deprived of any personal privilege whatsoever. The Guild in Toronto fought for the right of the individual to tell the truth as he might see it. And so in the long run, in a somewhat ironical way, newspaper men and women through organization are promoting and not destroying the romantic tradition that the man with a pencil and the back of an old envelope is king, if not for a day, at least until the next edition.

HEYWOOD BROUN

Washington Notes

FDR Is Just Around the Corner

THIS SESSION of Congress has closed with Mr. Roosevelt's prestige higher than it has been in months. This is the judgment of Congressmen, and is backed up by the Gallup and Fortune polls. It is a fact upsetting to all political tradition. Hitherto the iron rule has been that a President's influence should rise with business booms and fall with business depressions. So far the current slump has not visibly touched Mr. Roosevelt.

Congressmen say they are puzzled. The likeliest explanation is that the WPA has become a new, basic political factor. In the 1929 depression, it was the men and women who lost their jobs, savings and homes that turned the country against Mr. Hoover. You will remember the "Hoovertowns" which sprang up on the outskirts of all big cities, and in which Mr. Hoover's name was cursed. These were the breeding spots from which arose the national loathing of Mr. Hoover that found expression in 1932.

The new unemployed of today—or at least many of them—have found WPA jobs. God knows why they should feel grateful to Mr. Roosevelt. The jobs they have are semi-fake, with relatively miserable pay. Nevertheless it is demonstrable that they do feel gratitude. Perhaps they would not feel this way if unemployment insurance and public-works building were accepted, permanent institutions. But they fear, justifiedly, that if conservatives like the Republican Senator Vandenberg were to obtain office, even WPA jobs would be snatched away. Some non-political experts in the administration think that the depression may last through this year, but the chance of a mass shift of sentiment against Mr. Roosevelt seems remote.

The foundation of Mr. Roosevelt's current prestige among Congressmen is quite different. At least in the writer's opinion, it comes from the projected "purge" of Democratic Senators who have failed to toe the New Deal mark. Mr. Roosevelt's new sternness has given conservative Democrats the heebie-jeebies. This was obvious in the closing days of the session. Senator Jimmy Byrnes of South Carolina, who has given Mr. Roosevelt as much trouble as anyone among the professed administration supporters, shifted his vote so many times on the recovery bill that New Deal checkers were left reeling. Even Pat Harrison made tentative gestures towards reconciliation.

A similar effect was observable in the House. Representative Arthur P. Lamneck of Columbus, Ohio, came to the House on the anti-Hoover tide in 1930, supported Mr. Roosevelt in 1932 and is an alleged New Dealer. He has also shown himself to be a consistent reactionary, and has competed with Messrs. Eugene E. Cox of Georgia and Clare E. Hoffman of Michigan in blackguarding John L. Lewis. Last week Mr. Lamneck considered it prudent to obtain from Mr. Sam Rayburn, House majority leader, a formal note attesting to his Democratic regularity before venturing back to his district. The Democratic conservatives apparently fear that they cannot continue their practice of ringing the doorbells on both sides of the street—of telling the workers how deeply they love Mr. Roosevelt, while explaining to business men what a triple so-and-so he is.

After the wages-and-hours bill, it is possible that Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney's monopoly resolution will be this session's most important action. The special investigation committee is to have twelve members: three Senators, three Representatives and the nominees of six administration departments. The success of the inquiry depends on these men. Even with mutual good will, they face a heroic job.

Unhappily, the investigation begins in a haze of probably needless suspicion. During committee consideration of the monopoly resolution, a dispute arose between Mr. O'Mahoney and certain of the White House aides over the control of the committee's money. Understandable enough in itself, this disagreement was given a sharp edge by the fact that about the same time Mr. Roosevelt's intention to "purge" the opponents of Supreme Court reorganization became known. Among these Senators, Mr. O'Mahoney was a shining leader. His term does not end until 1940, but it must have made him uneasy to know that, if he were standing this summer, he would be marked as a victim.

Among the administrative departments, there is an incipient split between those who believe monopoly can only be regulated, and those who think it can be partly broken up. Commerce Department experts adhere to the former school, and are largely converts to Donald R. Richberg's plan for business "self-government." The economists of the Department of Agriculture have worked out an elaborate scheme for monopoly regulation, and, although they themselves have been neatly excluded from the O'Mahoney committee, their doctrine has many governmental advocates. Finally, the Federal Trade Commission, whose supposed duty it is to check monopolistic dealings, may itself be brought under the committee's scrutiny.

Because of these cross-currents of interest, anti-monopolists among the White House advisers are hoping that Mr. Roosevelt will see fit to pick one man as unofficial coordinator of the committee. The most obvious choice is Mr. Leon Henderson, economist for the WPA, whose brain-child the investigation really is. Back in 1934, Mr. Henderson, then adviser to the NRA, urged an examination of the business practices being carried on under the Blue Eagle codes. Despite the alarmed protests of business-minded code administrators, the inquiry was undertaken, and constituted the first serious-minded attack on monopoly since Woodrow Wilson's New Freedom.

After the dead-chicken case and the overthrow of the NRA, Mr. Henderson begged that the results of this investigation be used as a basis for a new general policy toward big corporations. Mr. Richberg was then a White House favorite. Apparently through his influence and those

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of his successors in the NRA, the monopoly findings were never collated or included in the NRA's final report. Mr. Henderson, meantime, had become special adviser to the Senate Commerce Committee, and, in the winter of 1935-36, proposed to its chairman, Robert J. Bulkley, substantially the same investigation that Mr. O'Mahoney is soon to conduct. About this time, Mr. Henderson found an ally in the present Solicitor General, Robert H. Jackson. Still later, Thurman W. Arnold became a third free-shooter in the anti-monopoly campaign. Whether Mr. Henderson can spare the time to act as coördinator for the O'Mahoney committee the writer does not know, but if not, a man of his convictions should be chosen.

Washington T. R. B.

Other People's Money

Promoters and Unsalable Surpluses

THE Securities and Exchange Commission has apparently finished the excellent and comprehensive study of investment trusts which it has been busy with for about a year and has sent to Congress the first instalment.

That report reveals that despite the amazing mortality of the trusts, the vitality of the promoters remained unimpaired. In spite of the fact that 400 of them bit the dust between 1927 and 1937, over 340 more were organized between 1933 and 1936, representing an estimated value of $1,800,000,000. How far the adventures of the trust organizers extended may be gathered from the fact that an estimated 1,500,000 persons own investment-trust certificates or shares.

It was a grand era and it is not yet over. The trust organizers and their victims are merely passing through one of the biannual Golgothas of all investment trusts.

It is passing strange how an idea germinates. In the days of the first Roosevelt revolution when the grouse-hunting tories were in full retreat, a prominent Wall Street banker and economist came forward with a plan to have the government take unsalable surpluses off the hands of business. His idea was that the government could get production going and keep it going if it would underwrite production, and this he claimed could be done if producers felt free to produce without the fear of being crushed under an unsalable surplus. This fear could be removed by a government policy of buying these surpluses when they proved unsalable so that the producers could go ahead and produce more and at the same time have their prices held aloft.

That idea seemed pretty goofy at the time. But it began to work its way into New Deal thinking. It finally burgeoned forth in the Commodity Surplus Corporation, which buys up all sorts of crop surpluses in order to support price levels. The Bituminous Coal Commission originally had a plan to have the government buy up the surplus coal lands from the companies which had made bad investments. Then SEC Commissioner Hanes, now named as fiscal adviser to the Treasury, came forward with a plan to have the government lend money to the producers to enable them to hold their unsalable surpluses on their shelves rather than sacrifice them at low prices. To be quite fair, it is not wholly a New Deal scheme, for Mr. Hoover tried something like this on a grand scale in his ill starred Federal Farm Board, which bought up wheat, cotton, corn and other major crops and sank its entire half-billion-dollar capital without any results.

But now the old idea comes forward again under new auspices—Mr. Sidney Hillman and the Amalgamated Clothing Workers' Union. The WPA has agreed to buy up ten million dollars' worth of surplus clothing to rid the producers of their surplus stocks so that they will feel free and safe to go ahead and produce more.

Apparently there is no argument that can be made against this from the point of view of the garment producers and their workers. If the producers can produce and keep the workers employed, knowing that the government will lift from their stocks the surplus they cannot sell, they will find themselves generally in good shape. But if this is a good policy for the dress manufacturers, it is also a good policy for the makers of shoes and shirts and socks and stockings and woolen goods; for the dealers in steel and coal and aluminum and chemicals; for the manufacturers of furniture and carpets and jewelry and millinery and hardware and, in fact, of everything. No possible reason can be advanced for its employment in one industry and not in another. And if it is employed in all, then the government will find itself buying the surplus products of all industry. But how will the government pay for them? Out of taxes? Or out of loans? It is going to pay for the ten million dollars' worth of goods it is buying from the dress manufacturers with WPA funds, that is, funds borrowed from the banks. How many billions a year will this amount to if generally applied?

This is not all. How will the government control the surplus? What will it call an unsalable surplus? At what price will it consider goods unsalable? All this means more organizations like the NRA, with endless boards, rules, regulations, formulas for fixing prices, production, etc. For it is inconceivable that the government is going to buy up surplus stocks without exercising some control of production and prices. Is this another case of starting something without measuring where it will end?

The Standard Oil Company of New Jersey has filed a registration statement with the SEC preliminary to offering $85,000,000 worth of securities. In the statement it tells something of its foreign business. The only point I have in mind in this connection is the typically American manner in which it points out the bad economics and folly of foreign countries. It seems that these countries have gone in for nationalism, unlike our duty-free, tariffless America (or do we really impose tariffs?). These countries are so nationalistic that they will not permit the S. O. to bring in refined oil, but force the company to build refining plants within the country's borders. If I remember correctly, we have a law that prohibits Americans from using in our inter-coastal trade or in any trade where the American flag is flown ships built in foreign countries. We have a few more such regulations. We have, indeed, been a pioneer in trade nationalism. JOHN T. FLYNN

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Spanish Omelette, with Ham

ALTHOUGH it is always possible that the right company could make a good fiction-picture out of current affairs in Spain, the odds against it are too infinite to monkey with. The dramatic arts have a special access to people's imaginations and nerve centers. And of all the arts, the movies play on the feelings of the most millions. Anything in films touching on things remote in space and time is fairly safe: anything that deals with matters of present hard feeling is just so much broken glass in an angry wound. If you made a true and good picture about Spain, the busy Catholics would be at their screaming and hopping around again; and if it were possible to dramatize the frank Catholic view, the easy-going millions of our democracy would rise out of their engrossing petty worries to give a great and awful yell. The movies aren't going to stir up any such trouble. And if they make a film on anything like Spain, they have to make it mostly hokum or just in fun.

All of which never stopped Walter (Wonderboy) Wanger. Casting around for something different and already seeing himself as quite a hot rock on matters of cosmos, Mr. Wanger hears about Spain (one will get you five Clifford Odets tipped him off), and decides that a picture showing the romance and drama of it all would be sensational, positively. So, writers, camera men, a director; Madeleine Carroll and Henry Fonda, Leo Carillo for laughs, Vladimir Sokolov for acting—Mr. Wanger will spare no expense except maybe on exteriors: why go on location for half your footage when it can be easy painted on glass? So there is romance, truth, drama, difference and humor, all in one picture, released under the title "Blockade."

The story is the familiar one of the beautiful female spy (against her will of course) and the young man of burning faith from the other (or right) side, who falls in love with her and indeed vice versa. It is a fact of screen record that Madeleine Carroll is among the most lovely of women; and Henry Fonda opposite her does very well at coming through silly rubbish to establish himself as a good man, an honest, troubled but steady spirit in his country's service. The enemy (designation carefully unknown) has got Miss Carroll and her weak father in their power: the Right (likewise undesignated) is rising up to fight for its homes and sheep and vineyards. Good stuff here: the mere quiet statement is enough. Then we get into the besieged town with Miss Carroll operating to destroy rescuing foodships, and hating it. Then plot and counterplot from down under to high up, the ship comes in on a ruse, all are saved, and Mr. Fonda speaks some ringing deep lines for the rights of man, the right to work in and breathe freely the air of his own land, worth fighting for.

These last lines and the intent hunger-worn faces of the people as they watch for the ship (unusually fine types, though passed too mechanically through the cutting machine) are what the whole thing should have been, and wasn't. It could have been carried on some such sort of story perhaps; but in the case of Walter Wanger's production of William Dieterle's direction of John Howard Lawson's script, there is achieved a deadly numb level of shameless hokum out of which anything true or decent rises for a second only to confound itself. When it comes to what "Blockade" has to say for Spain to the common bewildered man, identification has been so smoothly rubbed out that to protest its content, as some of our hair-trigger Catholic friends are already naïvely doing, is to give away the fact of a deep and abounding ignorance, or of a stinking guilty conscience, and very probably of both. OTIS FERGUSON

The Bandwagon

There is plenty of free speech in Jersey if you talk the right way. – *Mrs. Lucille Hicks, Highland Falls, N. Y., speaking in defense of Mayor Hague at the New York State Conference of Democratic Women. Quoted in The New York Times.*

Young Hammond [Ogden Hammond Jr., son of the former Ambassador to Spain] expects to pass his exams next fall, and after he gets into the State Department, he believes he can reorganize it along ultra-modern lines. He is a very opinionated young man—oh, very. Is sure Franco is right in Spain; would have liked to have fought there with Mussolini's or Hitler's cohorts and is quite certain the Republicans will "take over" John L. Lewis, because "Lewis needs money, power and position at the polls this fall." Said that Lewis is the "kind who would just as soon switch to fascism, as Roosevelt did to communism, to gain his own end."

"What about caring for the unemployed until this all happens?" I meekly asked him. "Feed them with bullets," he replied. "It's good enough for them anyway." – *Cornelius Vanderbilt Jr., writing in Rob Wagner's Script, Beverly Hills, Calif.*

The Bad Czech

An unheroic and chaotic element in Europe that suffers from an inferiority complex and with his round head, broad face and Asiatic, Mongolian features, violates the Germanic ideal of beauty. – *Description of the Czechs, published in the Arbeitsmann, German Labor Service organ, quoted in The New York Times.*

But Busy!

The electric bill is overdue at the La Salle Church and Social Center and if it's not paid (the total is $50) before Thursday the service will be shut off. Mr. Rardin and his needy parishioners are praying to the Deity that He will not let this happen. The telephone number is Diversey 9379. – *From a news item in The Chicago Daily News.*

Take a Nap

Get rid of your defeatist attitude at all costs. Use any means at hand. Read heartening articles. Take tap dancing. Take a hot bath. – *From an article by Clara Belle Thompson and Margaret Lukes Wise (discussing the problem of getting a job) in The Saturday Evening Post.*

Our readers are invited to contribute to this column and $1 will be paid for each item used. Address The Bandwagon, care of The New Republic. – THE EDITORS

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Correspondence

Major Eliot in Rebuttal

SIR: Mr. Lewis Mumford's remarks on my reply to his "Call to Arms" [The New Republic, June 15] consist, essentially, of a loud cry of "T'ain't so!" embellished with such illuminating adjectives as "pseudo-strategical," "imaginary," "extravagant," "fantastic," "preposterous" and "treacherous." This hardly rises to the dignity of argument; nevertheless one or two of Mr. Mumford's anguished refutations will bear critical examination—this time in words of one syllable, so to speak.

Japan, he says, would not seize Borneo as a reply to our adoption of Mr. Mumford's "counter-attack" policy. She would continue "the safer and more obvious policy of buying in the world market." *What* world market? Petroleum sources are not numerous. Russia may be ruled out as a Japanese aid. Iraq's output is fully taken up by the British and French. Venezuela is accessible only by Panama, where our non-intercourse policy comes into play. Mexico's west coast lacks both harbor and pipeline facilities and Mexico's oil industry is not flourishing just now. Rumania means doubling the sea-haul, which means doubling the tanker tonnage; it is not available. Moreover, our new policy is supposed to bolster up the British to do likewise, which Japan must assume they might: at Suez, or at Singapore. Navies, armies and air forces must have oil. Japan is fighting a war which her military overlords cannot afford to lose. The one available, certain source is the Dutch East Indies, and if confronted by threats and aggressive "counter-attack" policies, the Japanese war lords will make sure of that source. Admiral Takahashi, then Commander-in-Chief of the Japanese fleet, said in 1936: "Japan's economic advance must be directed southward. . . . In this case the cruising radius of the Japanese navy must be expanded suddenly as far as New Guinea, Borneo and Celebes." What does Mr. Mumford suppose that gentle hint meant? Let him reflect on the successive fates of Formosa, Korea, Manchuria and China. Am I raising bogies in attributing further aggressive purposes to the Japanese, if they are faced with the alternative of further aggression or humiliating retreat?

As to my "fantastic conception" of a fascist world blockade against the United States, permit me to disclaim ownership. *That* idea is Mr. Mumford's fantastic conception. It is his own suggestion that we must have "a navy capable of keeping the sea-lanes open in peace and war for the passage of goods to non-fascist countries" in the face of "fascist piracy." Keeping the sea-lanes open by means of a navy implies actual or potential resistance, otherwise the navy is unnecessary for the purpose. I merely pointed out that our navy cannot so operate in certain waters, which I listed, by reason of the elementary fact that it has no bases there, while the fascist navies have—either in each maritime region mentioned, or so placed as to command access to it. This is not to credit the fascist powers with "naval omnipotence"; it is merely a sensible realization of the facts. The military inferiority of the two axis powers as against France and Britain, who are on the spot, is no criterion of our ability to "keep the sea-lanes open" by naval operations in the Mediterranean and the Baltic, for example. Our nearest base is 3,000 miles from Gibraltar, and really, Mr. Mumford, such distances add to the difficulty of naval operations to a surprising degree. Whether our trade in these various waters would actively be menaced by "fascist piracy" or not, I leave to Mr. Mumford's sufficiently fertile imagination. I am only concerned to point out that if, as and when it is so menaced, we shall be wholly unable to protect it short of a full-dress war, and, short of this, our export trade must suffer. I hope Mr. Mumford will not overlook my well meant suggestion that he should read Mahan; his naval education really requires attention if he is to give advice so freely on subjects of naval policy.

In closing, I cannot help protesting somewhat plaintively against Mr. Mumford's parting shot, in which he accuses me of saying that "we dare not fight fascism in America because we have so many active fascists in our midst." I hope I may be forgiven any imputation of rudeness in pointing out Mr. Mumford's inattentive reading of my letter; the fact is that I said nothing of the sort. I said that Mr. Mumford was in error in supposing that such fascist groups as there may be here would be deprived of "active external support" by his non-intercourse policy; and I also said that American residents of German and Italian birth (not necessarily fascists) would very likely be resentful of our adopting a policy of "strong political action" against the lands of their birth, and that this would raise a difficult problem for us to deal with. I asked Mr. Mumford what he proposed to do about this problem, a point upon which I remain unenlightened. I do not see why reasonable doubts as to the inherent wisdom of a policy which would entail such difficulties cannot be entertained by "a good American." And by the way—is it not the Mr. Hague with whom Mr. Mumford is kind enough to compare me who answers all criticism by accusing his critics of not being good Americans?

Brooklyn, N. Y. GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT

No Award

SIR: Complying with your request for an explanation of the inconsistent conduct of our government relative to Spain and Japan [The New Republic, June 15], I am willing to make a guess. . . .

The influence of the Tory English government in our foreign affairs and the power and influence of the Catholic clergy determine our attitude toward Spain. . . .

As regards Japan, the more war material we sell the less we will feel the depression. We have not forgotten the factors that forced us into the World War. . . .

Norwalk, O. Q. D. P.

SIR: The State Department, like all other branches of the administration, is playing politics. It desires to please all people at the same time. The co-bosses of the Department, Hull and Welles, have deliberately created a "fence-straddling" foreign policy. Hull's aggressive statements are temporized by Welles's isolation sentiment. . . .

Thus the upshot of it is, and herein lies the "logical" explanation, that we really have no foreign policy—as yet.

Chicago, Ill. FRANKLIN CHINO

SIR: Here is the logical explanation of our present foreign policy: in one word—"Politics."

1. Secretary Hull, President Roosevelt and others make beautiful, democratic, liberal, anti-fascist speeches in order to get support and votes from liberals and anti-fascists.

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2. Secretary Hull, President Roosevelt, etc., apply the embargo on Loyalist Spain in order to get support and votes from the Catholic hierarchy and other fascists.

You will find that this administration will take no positive steps from now on that will offend any group that has votes.

Upper Darby, Pa. MRS. GEORGE F. BROWN

For Longo's Defense

SIR: A very brave young man is at this moment serving a prison sentence in a New Jersey penitentiary for no other crime than undauntedly opposing Mayor Hague's terror and corruption rule in Hudson County, New Jersey.

John Longo, though only twenty-four years old, has already made a splendid record for himself in this community. An outstanding Catholic, he was awarded the Risorgimento medal as the model young citizen of Italian extraction in Jersey City. He has consistently and sincerely opposed Mayor Hague's political machine, his brazen violation of the Constitution of the United States, his anti-union, anti-democratic program. For this John Longo got nine months in the penitentiary on a framed-up charge of election-law violations. Coming from a Hague court, such a verdict is almost ludicrous.

Mr. Vito Marcantonio, president of the International Labor Defense, has defended Mr. Longo in a legal battle distinguished by brilliance and vigor. He has proven that the jury which convicted Longo was packed with Hague stooges. The fight for Longo's freedom must be pressed immediately—for a new trial if that is won or on appeal to the higher courts. Several thousand dollars are needed at once for printing the briefs and records and preparing the legal papers. Mr. Marcantonio has defended and will continue to defend Longo without fee.

I feel confident that the readers of your publication will want to aid the defense of this young man. All contributions may be made payable to me as treasurer of the Longo Defense Fund at 205 West Fifty-seventh Street, New York City.

New York City IDA E. GUGGENHEIMER

From The New Republic Mail Bag

Lewis T. Davis of New York City feels The New Republic erred in the editorial "The Progressives and the Future" (May 11) when we said: "Neither in social theory, nor in the one going socialist state, does equality of reward for different contributions prevail." Mr. Davis refers to Marx's proclamation of the principle, "From each according to his capacities, to each according to his need," as the rule for distribution in a fully developed communist society. But the two principles, of course, are quite distinct. Even the latter, in Marxian theory, applies only to the final, ideal state of communist society. . . . Olga Davidson, secretary of the Chicago Committee of WPA Cultural Projects, sends us a moving letter, addressed to President Roosevelt, which pleads against the adoption of the proposed ruling that the cost per man on the WPA cultural projects shall not exceed $1,000, including maintenance, administration, materials and salaries.

Albin H. Youngquist of Lake Norden, South Dakota, American born of American parents in 1907, involuntarily lost his citizenship at the age of five years when his father became a naturalized Canadian citizen. He faces deportation unless Congress passes the Dickstein bill (H. R. 7546), which would remedy his legal plight. . . . Eunice Spellman of the New Theatre League, 132 West Forty-third Street, New York City, writes about the national conference of labor theatre groups that has recently been held. One of the League's most interesting activities is its "mobile units," small, play-producing companies equipped to take its productions "directly to the workers in the cotton fields, on the picket lines and in the union halls."

The July issue of Poetry: A Magazine of Verse will be a Federal Poets' number with contributions by Kenneth Fearing, Willard Maas, Alfred Hayes, Weldon Kees, Harold Rosenberg, Charlotte Wilder, Sterling A. Brown and others. It will also contain articles by Archibald MacLeish, Malcolm Cowley and Alfred Kreymborg and reviews by Sydney Salt, Jessica Nelson North and Peter deVries.

Anna Louise Strong, New York City, writes to complain bitterly of The New Republic editorial, "The New Communist Line" (issue of June 15). She accuses us of regarding the new line as "a recantation," charges us with "superficial lack of attention" and says we "repeated trite comments." She asks whether liberals' demands during a decade for a "really American Communist movement" have been merely hypocrisy. She accuses us of believing that the "struggle for democratic rights" constitutes an indefinite postponement of the social revolution, and says this is not true. She complains of our lack of attention to Earl Browder's "historic speech" which "provided the theoretical basis for the transformation of the Democratic Party in a Socialist direction—a transformation which is already going on in the more progressive wing of the Democratic Party but which has gone on blindly, responding to immediate practical needs but without any clear theoretical basis." Miss Strong feels that it is when the Communists in every country have succeeded in "digesting the past and expressing it in terms of today's concrete needs that they begin to attract to themselves the ordinary people of the country."

Charles C. Webber, of the Methodist Federation for Social Service, New York City, writes to complain of a sentence in The New Republic which describes the action of the Conference on World Economic Coöperation held in Washington at the end of March. The New Republic said that "a conference of peace societies, meeting in Washington, after a long debate, voted not to approve the idea of using force against aggressor nations." Mr. Webber feels that an accurate statement of what happened is that found in an article in The New York Times: "The Conference on World Economic Coöperation excluded, however, all proposed distinctions as between aggressor and non-aggressor nations moved on behalf of labor and consumer groups, referring such amendments to the recommendations of the committee of experts to the findings committee for inclusion in the finally published reports of the proceedings of the conference."

What's on the Air?

Maxwell Stewart speaks on "Youth in the World Today," Friday, June 24, 7:15 P.M., CBS.

James Sunter of the National Union of Teachers, London, speaks at the National Education Association convention, Monday, June 27, 5:15 P.M., NBC-Red Network.

Pearl Buck talks at the NEA convention, Tuesday, June 28, 10:45 P.M., CBS.

President Roosevelt, introduced by Mrs. Roosevelt, addresses the NEA convention, Thursday, June 30, 3 P.M., NBC-Blue Network and CBS.

Musical and dramatic programs of the week include Hans W. Steinberg conducting the NBC Symphony Orchestra, Saturday, June 25, 10 P.M., NBC-Red Network; Lewisohn Stadium concert by the Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, Sunday, June 26, 8:30 P.M., CBS; Helen Hayes in "Jane Eyre," Monday, June 27, 9 P.M., CBS; Arthur Fiedler conducting the Boston "Pops" orchestra, Wednesday, June 29, 9:30 P.M., NBC-Blue Network; and "Why Marry?" by Jesse Lynch Williams in the series of Pulitzer Prize plays, Thursday, June 30, 10 P.M., NBC-Blue Network.

All times given are Eastern Daylight Saving Time.

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Summer Book Section

Map of the New World

JEROME FRANK's "Save America First"[1] has a pamphleteering title, but it is far more than a pamphlet. It is, in fact, the most beautifully open-minded book that has come this way in years. Wise, skeptical of all those "first principles" which we glibly quote without ever actually testing them in terms of their origins, it is one of those exciting books that can shape, or at least color, the thinking of an epoch. The Marxists will hate it because it hands them some posers that are going to prove tougher than a Brazil nut for them to crack; indeed, it would take an exegetical united front of Earl Browder, Sidney Hook and Max Eastman to make even a dent in the section that discusses the role played by accident in historical change. The Fascists—or such of them as can read—will hate it because it has the tough-minded analytical virtues of Lawrence Dennis' "Is Capitalism Doomed?" but steers absolutely clear of Mr. Dennis' latter-day habit of indulging in dumb political *non sequiturs*. As for the Dorothy Thompsons and Henry Hazlitts who write the economic magic for our New York newspapers, Mr. Frank's book ought to make them sufficiently humble to begin their thinking all over again. But I fear it will merely serve to send them scurrying to Alex Sachs and Benjamin Anderson for a batch of hand-picked statistics on which to base some more of their ten-minute columnar and editorial refutations.

Inasmuch as both the Marxists and the traditional Free Trade capitalist economists derive their economic "laws" from a study of British history of the nineteenth century, Mr. Frank spends a good third of his time on "capitalism as what happened to happen in England." It "happened to happen to England" that she was an island, not a continent. John Strachey talks of the "law of motion of capitalism." Like Frank, I was impressed by this "law" until I began reading about capitalism in such places as Sweden, Denmark, Czechoslovakia and New Deal America. Then it began to dawn on me that the "law of motion" applied only to the capitalism of an industrialized island that is lacking in a potentially large domestic market—and an island, moreover, that had forced most of its population off the land. In countries with large peasant populations capitalism can persist with practically no motion at all. Frank singles out Mr. Strachey for particular scrutiny not just to be mean to an Englishman (although the temptation is always terrific), but because Strachey is our most persuasive Marxist popularizer. To those like Mr. Strachey who think that capitalism can't exist unless it has room to expand in geometric ratio, Mr. Frank points out that England got along with a relatively closed mercantilist economy from Queen Elizabeth's day to the days of Napoleon. And to the classical Free Traders, he points out that the British adventure in Free Trade has occupied a very short period as history goes. Besides, British Free Trade soon ceased to be a sound business involving the exchange of goods for goods, or goods for gold; it became, instead, a rigmarole of trading goods for paper in a way that enthroned the private banker and created a world bill-collecting agency—the British Navy—which has provoked nationalist neuroses and retaliation everywhere. England's Free Trade policy could only hope to work smoothly as long as the rest of the world was willing to exist on a "vegetable" basis, providing foods and raw materials in return for British manufactured goods. But England, being an island without a home market in which to dispose of an excess of manufactured goods, had to forestall a threatened unemployment slack by putting people to work making capital goods for export. As the Raushenbushes have recently pointed out in "The Final Choice: America Between Europe and Asia," Britain "industrialized the customers"—and the cycle was complete. By making her old customers self-sufficient, England cut the leading strings that bound the kids to nursie; and there was no longer any reason why the world should continue to depend on Great Britain to do the international policing, to enforce contracts, or to stand ready with money, a first-mortgage paper and a fountain pen.

Those who disagree with Mr. Frank's arguments usually argue that a creditor nation, whether it is an island or a continental area, must play the game as Britain has played it. They argue that the hegemony of the Free Trade world is now in the hands of the creditor United States. But the point to be made here is that Britain had to ruin her own agriculture to build her imperial system, and ruination is a price which the American farmer will almost certainly refuse to pay as long as he can send his spokesmen to Congress. If the United States is going to flood the world with the excess products of its own factories, it will be faced with the necessity of either selling on a global instalment plan (as it did in the Lending Twenties) or of taking something in exchange. If that "something" is not to be industrial goods produced by the sweated labor of less favored economies, what can it be except the foodstuffs and the raw materials which our own South and West are perfectly capable of supplying? As Charles Beard has said, the machine has long since ironed out regional productive differentiation; except in the case of labor differentials, it is cheaper to produce manufactured goods at home than it is to import them. So what can a creditor nation that is bent on playing England's nineteenth-century game do unless it is willing to ruin its own farmers? (Those who hope to found a farmer-labor party on a Free Trade-Collective Security basis had damn well better answer this question for themselves before they plunge ahead.) For a largely self-sufficient continental nation to base its future on a huge foreign trade may make sense for a favored few with titles to excess plant capacity, but it makes no sense whatever for the multitudes that will eventually be called upon to assume the police function of nineteenth-century Britain.

[1] Save America First, by Jerome Frank. New York: Harper and Brothers. 447 pages. $3.75.

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Mr. Roosevelt knew this in the days when he was reading Charles A. Beard; listening to Cordell Hull he forgets it.

On its moral side Mr. Frank's support of relative isolation follows his rejection of Hobson's choice. Like any humane person, Mr. Frank hates fascism and trembles to see it spread in Europe. But he fears that any move by Great Britain to fight German fascism would stem more from a desire to keep Europe from achieving continental economic integration than from any love for democracy. This puts the progressive American in a dilemma. If we fight with England to prevent Germany from making an integrated economic region out of Central Europe we will be abetting European economic anarchy and extending the power of France as the great European Dog-in-the-Manger. On the other hand, the cost of integrating Central Europe on German terms promises to be so horrible in its destruction of human liberty that economic anarchy and rule by a Dog-in-the-Manger seem preferable. Faced with a choice between the vicious dachshund and the whining French poodle, what can an American do? As for Mr. Frank, he'll take a nice, self-respecting isolationist cat.

Mr. Frank's critique of Marxism rests on his prior riddling of economists whose postulates were accepted by Marx, and on a refutation of Hegel's political monism. Some of his most delightful pages are devoted to a discussion of the part which accident plays in history. His weakest pages are his programmatic ones; he does no more than adumbrate certain methods whereby domestic purchasing power can be increased under democratic capitalism. But of the delights and the weaknesses of "Save America First," more later. Perhaps next week, unless a good book comes along to demand prior attention. JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

Can We Stay Out?

America Goes to War, by Charles C. Tansill. Boston: Little, Brown and Company. 741 pages. $5.
And So to War, by Hubert Herring. New Haven: Yale University Press. 172 pages. $2.

BOTH OF THESE BOOKS should be required reading for Americans in these stormy days when the peace of the world lies at the mercy of a dictator's whim or the steadiness of a frontier-guard's trigger-finger.

Dr. Tansill has produced a most carefully written and thoroughly documented study of American foreign relations during the period 1914-17. It is a book destined to be the standard authority on our pre-war years. But it is more than a mere work of reference; it is a warning and a guidepost. Laying it aside, I found four impressions outstanding in my mind: First, the almost unlimited power of the President of the United States for the time being in determining the issues of peace or war for this nation. Second, the certainty that in the future as in the past, belligerents engaged in a life-and-death struggle are not going to have any "interest in legal theories, but in winning the war"—with no inclination to permit their interests to be "strangled in a network of juridical niceties." Neutral rights that are not firmly maintained will be swept away before the grim demands of military necessity. Third, the necessity for the education of our people in the duties and responsibilities of neutrals, and the cultivation in America of a passionate devotion to the principle, not of peace at any price, but of American neutrality and neutral rights. Fourth, the fundamental fact so well stated by Admiral Mahan, that "in diplomacy, in international negotiation, force underlies every contention as a possible final arbiter."

Neutrality as a national policy must be based on the power to defend it, and the will, if need be, to use that power. It is a misconception of both the isolationist and collective-security schools of thought that such defense of neutral rights necessarily leads to war. One who reads Dr. Tansill's book with imagination, reflecting on what might have been had the policy, the power and the will been all three present in our councils of state during those crucial years, will have little difficulty in deciding whether diplomatic and military weakness is an ingredient of safety.

With a terrible lucidity Dr. Tansill shows the steps by which we staggered along the road to war, not without doubts and hesitations, but with measurable daily progress toward the battlefield. It is not necessary to agree with Dr. Tansill that it would have been better for the world had we stayed out of the War, nor that a "peace without victory" would have resulted from our abstention; these are controversial questions to which many men give many answers. What is important now is that having made the adventure and learned the lesson, the burned child shall have the common sense and self-control to shun the fire of other people's wars. The tremendous value of Dr. Tansill's book lies in the clarity with which he throws into sharp relief the complex influences that were brought to bear on our diplomacy and on the decisions of a President who at heart wanted peace, and came in the end to the arbitrament of the sword. It is a pity that so monumental and otherwise wholly admirable a book as this could not have been executed throughout in the objective spirit of its preface. Unfortunately, in trying to be fair to our late opponents, the author has given some parts of the book a decidedly anti-British bias. But this is a defect which the discerning reader will perceive and discount: it weighs but little against the permanent worth of the contribution Dr. Tansill has made to our understanding of a period of our history which, more than any other, requires the present and prayerful study of our people.

Mr. Herring's little book makes a rather startling epilogue to Dr. Tansill's. Written far more violently, and with a distressing disregard for accuracy in some particulars (he assumes, for example, that a legal state of war exists in China and therefore "Japan is not liable to anyone for damage resulting from military operations"), Mr. Herring's book can nevertheless be forgiven its trespasses for one chapter, that entitled "The Powers of the President." Here is the best sort of constructive criticism, and Mr. Herring's suggestion that constitutional means should be found to limit the presidential powers as to foreign relations, by providing a Joint Foreign Affairs Committee of both Houses of Congress (with representation for minority parties) whose counsel and assent would be a prerequisite to public declarations of foreign policy, commitments and important notes, is wholly admirable. No reader of Dr. Tansill's book will be in doubt of the wisdom of Mr. Herring's suggestion.

Much of the real value of Mr. Herring's work is impaired by his "grand manner" no less than by his extrava-

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gant assertions. Thus he tells us "there is not a chapter of the Japanese record in China which cannot be matched, line for line, by . . . American stupidities in Haiti" (and this was written after the sack of Nanking); and again we are informed that Dr. Stanley Hornbeck, of the State Department's Far Eastern Division, "is disqualified to serve as a counselor" to a neutrally disposed government because he is distrustful of Japan! That Japan's own conduct may have warranted Dr. Hornbeck's distrust is not for Mr. Herring, apparently, a consideration of weight. Mr. Herring's conclusions, in the main, are sound; his method of presentation will recall, to readers who agree with those conclusions, the wail of Marshal Villars: "May God preserve me from my friends!" GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT

An Eagle Remembered

"Eagle Forgotten": The Life of John Peter Altgeld, by Harry Barnard. The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 496 pages. $4.

IT WAS John Peter Altgeld's tragedy, as well as his glory, that, as Governor of Illinois, he had the courage to free the three remaining victims of the Haymarket Affair with a pardon message which proclaimed their innocence to the world, and that he dared oppose Grover Cleveland's course in the Pullman strike. These two actions brought down upon his head a torrent of abuse such as few men of comparable distinction have suffered. Today Altgeld stands as one of the sturdiest and most attractive political figures of the close of the nineteenth century. And the merciless vilification to which he was subjected in his own day now serves to add to his stature.

Altgeld's life realized, to a remarkable degree, the nineteenth-century American dream. He was the poor farm boy who fought his way to success. He won high state office, and played a leading role in national politics in the 1896 campaign. He acquired wealth, too, through extremely shrewd real-estate investments. Characteristically enough, Altgeld believed that it was "the successful private individual who is the important factor in American society." Yet he did not fit into the normal pattern of his day. Altgeld's individualism was tempered by a humanitarianism and sense of justice which made him an earnest, liberal and intelligent reformer. Nor did he quite conform to type as a politician. He sincerely tried to govern in the interests of the "common man," as he conceived these interests, and he was incorruptible in a period when probity was a political disability. His present biographer makes it clear, however, that he was not the unblemished knight fighting the forces of darkness that some of his champions have created. Pushed by great personal ambition, he was not always above political chicanery.

In "Eagle Forgotten" Harry Barnard has fashioned the most complete portrait of Altgeld that has yet appeared. Direct and competently written, this biography is a dramatic account of Altgeld's career. Altgeld emerges as an appealing, human, three-dimensional figure. Generally balanced in his judgments, Mr. Barnard has successfully guarded against the temptation to give his subject heroic proportions. The biography also makes available new material which throws light on many of Altgeld's activities. The background of Illinois politics, of the Haymarket Affair, of the Pullman strike, and of certain aspects of the free-silver movement and the campaign of 1896 is skillfully and, for the most part, accurately sketched.

"Eagle Forgotten," however, has its shortcomings. If the distinction is permitted, it can be said that the book is better biography than it is history. Mr. Barnard's limitations as a historian are indicated by his judgment that had there existed in the seventies and eighties "men of statesmanship in places of political power, much could probably have been done with effect to forestall or cushion later explosions in the Capital versus Labor struggle." Mr. Barnard also misreads his evidence on other occasions. Thus, he gives credit to Altgeld for the progressive planks of the 1896 Democratic platform. Altgeld, he says, was "the brain . . . the will . . . the dominating force behind the platform." This is misleading, for it ignores the Populist influence. Most of the 1896 liberal tenets had been in the air as Populist demands from 1890 on. Careless judgments elsewhere and occasional factual inaccuracies also mar the book. But these criticisms should not obscure the fact that it is a welcome addition to the writings on Altgeld and to the literature of the period.

HENRY DAVID

Simple Separate Person

Walt Whitman and the Springs of Courage, by Haniel Long. Santa Fé: Writers' Editions. 144 pages. $2.50.

IN THIS ESSAY the Whitman of "the word En-Masse" has been subordinated to the "simple separate person." It is claimed that Whitman "believed that serious morality is to find one's own essential nature and live according to it with a good conscience," and that "he argues for the rightness and sufficiency of a man to himself." Whereas in fact Whitman tirelessly argued that the individual was *not* sufficient unto himself; that true individuality and the democratic average were dialectical opposites "(as the sexes are opposite) . . . neither of highest avail without the other"; that the really superior individual "sees greatness and health in being part of the mass"; and that the chief purpose of a poet was "to bring people back from their persistent strayings and sickly abstractions, to the costless average, divine, original, concrete."

Mr. Long says that to Whitman culture was self-shaping *in the widest possible fashion;* yet he calls "absurd" Whitman's demand that culture should take into account "practical life, the West, the working men, the facts of farms and jack-planes and engineers." The book's emphasis is on Whitman's personal "ordeal of preparation," his "fight toward integration." Extended discussion is restricted to the sex poems, to Whitman's personal relationships, to his interpretation of "love" and "friendship." Not till the tenth page before the end is it disclosed that Whitman's poems were "suggestions for a far-flung campaign against our chaos and futility." The campaign itself, the barbaric yawp for more democracy, personal, national and international, is hardly mentioned. Indeed, the full influence of Whitman on Haniel Long is less felt here than in the impressive poems of "Pittsburgh Memoranda."

PHILIP STEVENSON

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* * *

If we were a nation of such thumping patriots as we pretend to be we would have been helping you, not hindering you, in your battle to save lives, sanity and something like decency among the desolate legions of the submerged.

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* * *

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The Business of Poetry

Adonais: A Life of John Keats, by Dorothy Hewlett. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 415 pages. $3.50.

LADIES LIKE to write about Keats. It is only a little more than ten years since Miss Amy Lowell published her detailed record, in which, with an anxiety almost maternal, she seems to try to account for every day and night of the poet's life. It is evidence of the enduring and increasing quality of Keats's fame that on the basis of a few additional personal details and identifications of documents another full-sized biography should be projected and accepted. In that respect Matthew Arnold's words are justified: "He is with Shakespeare." At the same time one is a little puzzled as to why Mr. Buxton Forman, without whose "help and preliminary encouragement this book would not have been," should have felt it necessary to exercise his literary paternity, and as to what of value Mr. Fred Edgecumb, "the fairy godfather of all good students of Keats," and others whose services are recognized with equal graciousness, could have contributed. In contrast with these generous acknowledgments is Miss Hewlett's nonchalant nod to her predecessors—"I am naturally in some measure indebted to the works of the late Sir Sidney Colvin and Miss Amy Lowell."

It is gratifying to find that Miss Hewlett, working "direct from the sources," comes to substantially the same conclusions as Miss Lowell. Neither yields to the other in critical intelligence and genuine admiration of the poet. Both ladies combat the tendency to read Keats's whole life in terms of its tragic close. Miss Hewlett in particular emphasizes the social background of the poet, the happy school days at Enfield, the horrors of medical education and the romping gayeties of the middle-class circles—the Hunts, the Mathew girls, Mary Frogley and Reynolds and his sisters—that Keats frequented, and in which poetry assumed the occasional character of a parlor game. Both ladies defend the character of Fanny Brawne from the charge of coquettishly playing with her lover and carelessly contributing to his suffering. That she was the chief source of the agony of his last days is clear; but it was the intensity of his own passion and the poignancy of its frustration that made it impossible for Keats, after their parting, to read her letters or write to her. Both ladies defend Keats against the inference, from the fact that he wrote of taking mercury, that he had contracted syphilis when visiting Bailey at Oxford. Miss Lowell points out that in the early nineteenth century mercury was prescribed for a dozen maladies; and Miss Hewlett notes with some acumen that the correspondence, which Bailey allowed to be published, implicates that gentleman as well, and as he was an Archdeacon in the English Church—enough said.

Again both ladies reject the view that adverse criticism had any effect in shortening Keats's life, although Miss Hewlett records that in his last illness he held in his hand the articles in Blackwood's and The Quarterly, which added to his sense of failure. Miss Hewlett reflects the new interest of literary biography in the growth of reputation, and gives more space than Miss Lowell to the contemporary reviews of Keats's poetry. The violence of animadversion with which it was received is a perennial source of wonder to later readers. The explanation is to be found in the effort of the upholders of the aristocratic tradition to defend poetry from the malpractice of plebeians. It is true that the animus of The Quarterly and Blackwood's was partly political, directed against Leigh Hunt and including Keats as his protegé. But it cannot be doubted that the real mischief was done when Bailey innocently told the mean and venomous Lockhart (the "Lockhart, be a good man," of Scott's deathbed admonition) that Keats "had been brought up to the profession of medicine which he had abandoned for the pursuit of literature." The very terms in which the communication was made must have set Lockhart's teeth on edge. The defenders of poetry could stomach a shepherd or a plowman poet, such as Hogg or Burns, but an apothecary was too much; and even Byron, in spite of his friendship with Keats's friends Hunt and Shelley, could characterize Keats's poetry only in terms of bed-wetting and masturbation.

If ladies are never tired of writing about Keats, both women and men never grow weary of reading about him. We are accordingly grateful to Miss Dorothy Hewlett for an interesting and workmanlike biography, even if it is not of the epoch-making importance which the author and her scholarly backers seem to attribute to it.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT

Selected Poems, by John Gould Fletcher. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. 249 pages. $2.50.

THE CLEAREST THING that emerges from Fletcher's selected poems is the line of his own career, twisting over the twenty-five years represented, to head, at the end, in a direction opposite from its beginning. In his best remembered book, "Irradiations—Sand and Spray," the *décor* of his poetry was a Bakstian affair of "cinnabar trees" and "vermilion pavilions," pagodas and rhododendrons. Light and color were celebrated in a kind of poetic chromatopsia. The most recent verse in this collection moves on a bare stage, murky and underlit. From an excess of accretive imagery, he has moved into a manner that is sparse and undecorated. He has given up the sprawl of *vers libre* and "polyphonic prose" for a clumsy adherence to metric and rhyme. Moralizing replaces description and, in general, exuberance gives way to gloom. And always behind the writing are the influences, the Imagists with Amy Lowell and Pound, the Nashville agrarians, and Marxist literature as a resistant force; and, at the same time, the shifting environments of pre and post-war life, London, New York, Arizona, the Mississippi and Monadnoc, the South and the cities and the sea.

For a quarter-century Fletcher has tried to characterize experience. He tried it by describing, with a heaping on of imagery so obvious that it was frequently inexact. (Ships, for instance, are not like whales or ducks or fish in spite of their common habitat.) Then, more directly, he tried to say general things about life, and he said, most of the time, honest platitudes. The range of his inclusiveness

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gradually narrowed to embrace, at the end, not much beyond a bounded personal world. But this second attempt, in its honesty, makes better verse. As a quiet and private rhetoric it is sometimes moving, and the public who paid his earlier books a too generous attention owe him now a reading.

Imagism was the starting point, and imagism, in retrospect, seems to have so few connections with reality that it floats in the literary past like a stray blimp. Whatever the founders of the movement may have said about their origins, they were, as Americans, wholly in the Whitmanesque tradition. And therein, it appears, were the reasons for their failure. Fletcher's is an imagist case history. More clearly than Pound, who had a peppery tenacity and great versatility, or Amy Lowell, who could satisfy her creative desires outside of poetry by creating a personality, Fletcher was thrown back on his own heritage. He brought to a broadly individualistic tradition a narrow individualism. To sustain verse that is Whitmanesque requires, besides a peculiar technical equipment, a frontier vigor, a perception that is actually inclusive, and an imaginative voltage that only optimistic individualism can generate. As he grew older Fletcher found he lacked these qualifications. Yea-saying became more and more difficult. He was making "song even in this hell." Echoes brought "only the wild cries of mechanic woe." Man's heart, "that small span between the reason and the will," was "haunted by hopeless sin." So the lacquer and the jade flaked off and, in the later poems, things are all colorless and drab. He went on writing, but his kind of poetry could never square with a world where the embrace had turned to a shudder.

These poems are out of gear. One feels it in the heroes they celebrate—mostly the sour ones, like Nietzsche, Napoleon and Hardy. Edison is ironically there in an elegy, with his electrical substitutes for the nineteenth-century sun. More striking is Columbus, once more the symbol of discovery. Whitman had made him thank God for "light rare untellable, lighting the very light." Fletcher gives us, in contrast, a small and ineffective explorer, one who can only "tremble at the oncoming darkness." His Columbus is a different man, sailing toward a different continent.

JOHN FINCH

The Herne's Egg and Other Plays, by W. B. Yeats. New York: The Macmillan Company. 136 pages. $2.

TWO OF THESE PLAYS are new versions in verse of "The King of the Great Clock Tower." The other play, "The Herne's Egg," is a fantasy on the Leda theme, which also plays a prominent part in Yeats's new introduction to "A Vision." This myth has figured much in Yeats's later writings and is the subject of one of his most remarkable poems. He has tied it up with the philosophico-astrological system elaborated in "A Vision" but its real importance for Yeats seems to be a personal one (see the reference to Leda in "Among School Children"). All three of the plays in this volume are really variations on the same situations: a cold-blooded and beautiful woman, who first demonstrates her power by destroying an admirer, then shows that she has come under the spell of his power—in the first case, by trying to catch his departing soul and bring it back in a child of her own by another; in the second case, by dancing, Salomé-fashion, before his severed head, which sings to her. Yeats in his seventies is still a great writer: his rehandlings of his old subjects continue always fresh because his art itself is always changing. There is a new homeliness and humor in his latest work which make his imaginings less trancelike yet do not impair their peculiar enchantment. EDMUND WILSON

Reading the Spirit, by Richard Eberhart. New York: The Oxford University Press. 87 pages. $2.50.

SINCE MR. EBERHART'S POETRY is little known outside of England, where he has hitherto been published, it is probably a good idea to try to indicate here his approximate place in the poetic tradition. His distinctly conscious literary debts are to Blake, Hopkins and the seventeenth-century metaphysical poets. The Eliot influence is very slight, appearing only in the somewhat Ash-Wednesdayish rhythms and speech of "1934." The influence of Whitman, which Michael Roberts in his Foreword finds a considerable one, I fail to trace except in one poem, "Song of the Soul." But the three major influences sufficiently indicate the kind and quality of the verse. Like Blake's, it is an intensely personalized expression of experience:

> And I saw happiness glide by
> Small as a madman's eye.

Like Hopkins', it attempts to flesh in language the impact of immediate sense perceptions:

> Yet, feel-less
> How often, we, fallen fell adown
> From our free skyey realness,
> Too close to men-mesh and town.

And like Crashaw's and other seventeenth-century poetry, it delights in the exaggerated conceit and pun:

> We got great climaxes by post.
> Our sperms of words had for their ovum
> Every envelope, though ghost
> Life, like life, was only cloven.

Obviously, these examples are highly derivative and, excepting the first, not very successful. But they are not typical. It is greatly in Mr. Eberhart's favor that his poetry is most successful when it is least derivative.

On increasing intimacy with the verse, it becomes clear that Mr. Eberhart has his own integrity, one which in his best work creates its own speech and idiom. The essence of this integrity sems to lie in a sensibility vividly aware of the world and yet curiously isolated and self-centered. There is an insistence upon the first person throughout the book that is almost frenetic at times. It is as though the poet had reversed and adapted Descartes' proposition to read: I am, therefore I believe; and adopted it as an article of faith:

> Leave me. Alone I can pluck up a looking-glass,
> And say my own eyes to my own eyes are, now.

I suspect that many of the defects of the verse are due to an exaggerated awareness of this introverted sensibility: for example, the disjointed violence of feeling and language in "On Hearing Beethoven's Opus 127"; and the excessive morbidity there and elsewhere. The best poems are those in which the intellectual control is most consistently

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maintained. And this fact ties into what is apparently Mr. Eberhart's solution of the conflict between his locked-in sensibility and the world. Throughout the later poems the idea of "intellectual fruition" recurs again and again, somewhat reminiscently of Yeats's tower: "And I have eased reality and fiction/Into a kind of intellectual fruition." This ideal finds its clearest expression in one of the most perfectly achieved poems in the book, "In a Hard Intellectual Light":

> In a hard intellectual light
> I will kill all delight,
> And I will build a citadel
> Too beautiful to tell.
>
> O too austere to tell
> And far too beautiful to see,
> Whose evident distance
> I will call the best of me.
>
> And this light of intellect
> Will shine on all my desires,
> It will my flesh protect
> And flare my bold constant fires. . . .

It is this intellectual control of sensibility, the "evident distance" the poet puts between himself and his material, which gives memorable power and precision to such pieces as "The Groundhog," "Caravan of Silence," "Necessity" and "Dissertation by Wax Light." PHILIP HORTON

Vale Blithe Minsky, Also Ave

Strip Tease: The Vanished Art of Burlesque, by H. M. Alexander. New York: Knight Publishers. 124 pages. $2.

EVERY YEAR since Jack London scribbled his piece on the opening of the Columbia in 1904 some writer publicly bares his head before the expiring floozy of burlesque while his neighbor hails her reincarnation.

I doubt if any two living veterans could agree on what was burlesque or when it started to decline. Bernard Sobel's underground history of the game included most of the phases. The name at one time covered skits on Broadway successes, lady boxers, Jewish comics, hot frankfurters in the intermission, comedy quartettes, Irish baritones, Rose Snydell and the rolling of empty beer bottles down the aisles. Sobel may have skimmed the cream from his memories but he's pretty certain at what point the milk turned sour: it was the night they whispered that Earl Carroll was planning a legitimate show on Broadway wherein a girl would bare a breast. Little more than a decade later five girls nonchalantly bumped, ground and peeled to utter innocence before a sad-eyed audience at the Gotham, on 125th Street and Third Avenue. This was routine to them and the addicts, but the show was pinched and the ensuing conviction precipitated the historical clean-up of last year.

Mr. Alexander's book carries a title that might sadden Sobel and puzzle many before him. To them burlesque went out when the strip-act came in. But in these latter days it seems to be agreed that the only inventive item left in burlesque is the technique of undressing that started as a static blonde representing the Statue of Liberty

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and achieved on its upward climb to art Ada Leonard, June St. Clair, Evelyn Myers, a movie contract for Gypsy Rose Lee, and the weekly patronage—when Ann Corio was in Washington—of the late Mr. Justice Holmes.

Some people may wonder what sense burlesque literature can have other than the doubtful excitement of a vicarious peek. Well, it may do something to warn dramatic critics off admiring "folk art" they never saw. Most writing on burlesque makes you more and more suspicious of the accepted academic vision of the Elizabethan stage, of the roving actor troupes of seventeenth-century France, and of all circuses. All later commentators are bound, for interest's sake, to anthologize the best detail and make a patchwork which no single show or era ever was. There was a time, I gather, when you snuck into a seat at the old Irving Place and couldn't say whether the bum on your right was a bum or John Dos Passos. But in spite of the commedia-del'-arte tip-off, the attraction that was real to literati and jerks alike was the stripping. Mr. Alexander for the purposes of his Final Report, be it understood, sat through a score of strip-acts and agrees with most other spectators that the best, as well as the best applauded, strippers are the ones with some extra-sexual flair. This would seem to be a good and disinterested point. But as in any other male estimate of an actress, it's the critic's sexual whim that makes the choice and his rationalizing which goes to justify it. Mr. Alexander is an honest reporter, yet he singles out for glory a minor brunette as proclaiming not so much a yen but evidence of judgment.

But Mr. Minsky knows the customers are not coming to see a good show or an indifferent one. It's this girl or that they want to see and he is playing with the infinite the more strippers he can employ. After all, the technical gift, once they've decided their style is "hot," "sweet," or "slow" and have learned the strut, is an easy thing to master. But bodies have every shape and men in search of abnormal satisfaction don't look for Ziegfeld's crusading measurements; they don't want a standard, they want a substandard of the bizarre, the odd, the ripe. Throw out the strippers and you won't get a dozen men left to sleep through the smoky reek of the comics' ancient gags.

Mr. Alexander says rightly that it was no new access of shame that caused the excitement a year ago. It was simply that Mr. Minsky's press agent did him proud and thereby did him dirt. When the Oriental was opened bang next door to the French Casino, nice people got in by mistake. A Catholic or two, for instance, and a few perambulating members of the Society for the Prevention of Everything. And Mr. Moss. But when you know a good thing it's practically impossible to leash the tongue. And even Mr. Alexander, who sighs over the publicity, tells his readers where in Baltimore you can see the all-time low in a midnight shambles. So Mr. Alexander's vivid coverage actually completes the police story. He may really believe burlesque is dead, or maybe his title was just a blind. The name may be dead in this city (the burlesque houses are right back where they were), but still where the cock crows there play Hank Henry and Rags Ragland, Bobbie Morris, and Marjorie Roye and Evelyn Myers, talents that can take any name—even "Follies"—and glorify it.

ALISTAIR COOKE

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Albion in Wonderland

Britain and the Dictators: A Survey of Post-War British Policy, by R. W. Seton-Watson. New York: The Macmillan Company. 478 pages. $3.50.

BRITISH FOREIGN POLICY is frequently less intelligible to Britishers (save for the silent few on the "inside") than it is to non-Britishers. This is particularly the case when those who formulate and administer policy are obliged, as they are today, to dissimulate and disguise their purposes for reasons of domestic politics. Professor Seton-Watson of the University of London is a distinguished historian and a well known authority on Central Europe and the Danube Basin. He is not on the "inside." When he deals with documented events, as in his "Britain and Europe: 1789-1914," he handles his materials with ease. When he deals with contemporary mysteries and unanswered questions, as he does in this sequel, he lacks sureness of touch and tends to become lost in a wilderness of disoriented speculation. He quotes Prince Kaunitz: "It is prodigious how much the English do not know of Europe." One may add: It is prodigious how much the English do not know of England.

For all of that, the book is readable and useful as a surface survey of recent British foreign policy. It reviews in order the pre-war and war background, the peace settlement and the hopeful decade, and British relations with the USSR, Italy and Germany. The last four chapters deal with the Danube and the Balkans, the Ethiopian war, the Spanish war and British policy today: "A Problem of Ethics, Psychology and Strategy." A hasty epilogue discusses *Anschluss*. There are no startling revelations, no trenchant analyses, no provocative arguments. But there are grace and competence and relevant facts.

The thesis is that British policy is not perfidious but merely muddled. In fact the muddle is more Dr. Seton-Watson's than Downing Street's. He shares it with most of his fellow countrymen who seek to dissect their government's policies without reference to class relationships or *Realpolitik*. His ambivalences make the world a complex place of "on the one hand" and "on the other hand"—as no doubt it is. But the object of studying muddles is to clarify them, not to muddle them further. Russia, Dr. Seton-Watson thinks, is bad, but is getting better. Fascist Italy is the real threat to the Empire, but Mussolini is somehow a splendid fellow. Though Germany is also bad, a "deal" is possible—but it must *not* give Hitler a free hand in the East, which is the only interest Berlin has in a deal. In Spain both sides are bad. "Franco himself is not a Fascist in the ordinary sense, though he has come to lay increasing stress upon discipline as the only exit from chaos." Non-intervention is good, but if it leads to Mussolini's mastery of the Mediterranean, Britain must stand solidly with France. Isolation is impossible. Salvation is to be had only by collective resistance to aggression. But Chamberlain's "middle course" is "very wise."

One wonders whether the author still thinks so after the Ciano-Perth bargain of April, which he failed completely to anticipate. He is somehow like all middle-class Britishers. He is Mr. Britling. He is willing to "see it through," but he doesn't quite know the whys or hows. He trusts

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his rulers and thinks them fundamentally honest. The Tory line has escaped him. And without that, his book, for all its wisdom and occasional brilliance, is more valuable as a revelation of a national state of mind than as a significant contribution to the understanding of the dynamics of diplomacy.

FREDERICK L. SCHUMAN

The Life and Important Work

The Life of Chevalier Jackson: An Autobiography. New York: The Macmillan Company. 229 pages. $3.50.

IN 1877, when Chevalier Jackson was twelve years old, a set of tools stranded one thousand feet below the surface in an abandoned Pennsylvania oil well was given up for lost. To the wonder of neighbors and well-diggers, however, the boy designed a multi-barbed harpoon, and with it the tools were salvaged. Twenty-two years later the same technique enabled Jackson to remove the scarf pin from the bronchus of a child whose case had likewise been dismissed by surgeons as hopeless. It is this kind of transfer from adolescent talents and struggles to future achievements that sets the tone for Dr. Jackson's autobiography. The invention of a bronchoscope that functions successfully 98 percent of the time, the dogged ability to hurdle medical skepticism—these Dr. Jackson credits to a boyhood training whose rigors included tortures from public-school bullies in a rough mining town, a period as cook on a reeking fishing schooner, continual sparring with poverty, the beginnings of pulmonary tuberculosis, and residence during medical school in a Pittsburgh garret, his meals composed of Pepper Pot soup, which he stewed for himself.

Surprisingly enough, in all this long book there is not much emphasis on the actual use of bronchoscopy itself. The press has always been squeezing drama from Jackson's more spectacular cases—the medical student from Detroit with a hooked dental bridge in his gullet, the Massachusetts woman who carried a screw in her lung for forty years, the boy who came from New Zealand to get rid of a swallowed nail—and if he leaves out the sentimental trimmings of these cases, or omits them altogether, little is lost. But even without the human ingredient, surely there would be interest in details of a science so delicate that every case requires its own set of instruments, and every operation must have a dress rehearsal on a dummy and an animal; surely a few reproductions of Dr. Jackson's admirable paintings, scattered through the book, might be cut out in favor of diagrams of the bronchoscope in action in the grapevine pattern of throat and bronchial tubes, bringing up diseased tissue for diagnosis or fishing up an open safety-pin.

But the book gives plenty about Dr. Jackson's career. From the medical meeting in 1890 when he imprudently introduced his method before it was quite ready, he has devoted himself to publicizing "safe bronchoscopy." The bronchoscopic clinics in almost every large city in the United States today are tribute to the man who resigned five chairs in Bronchoscopy, one after another, staying just long enough in each to be sure it would remain after he left. "Your medical school," he would say each time to puzzled colleagues and trustees, "doesn't need me; bronchoscopy does."

MIRIAM BORGENICHT

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A Reader's List

THE NEGRO COLLEGE GRADUATE, by Charles S. Johnson (University of North Carolina Press, $3). A thoroughly documented study of the past and present status of the 43,821 Negroes who received professional and scholastic degrees from American colleges between the 1820's and 1936. Contains a fine bibliography, appendix and index, 20 charts and 142 statistical tables. Good chapter on the present philosophy of the Negro.

A POLITICAL HISTORY OF THE CHEROKEE NATION, by Morris L. Wardell (University of Oklahoma Press, $3.50). The history of an autonomous Indian nation, from its removal to the West in the 1830's to its destruction as a political entity in 1907. The Cherokees used statesmanship and diplomacy in their struggle to meet federal demands, to keep railroads and speculators from swallowing their territories and to develop a stable but native civilization. A sympathetic record.

THE LAST GENRO, by Bunji Omura (Lippincott, $3.50). A lively biography of "liberal" Prince Kimmochi Saionji, chief counsellor of three Japanese Emperors, the maker of a dozen premiers, and the last of the elder statesmen. Slightly novelized, but a good picture of the rise of a modern state. Contains a valuable glossary of Japanese words and names of Japanese modern figures.

LITERATURE AS EXPLORATION, by Louise M. Rosenblatt (D. Appleton-Century, $2.25). A really important book, in spite of its insipid title. Writing chiefly for teachers of high-school and college English, the author has managed to show the relevance of social science to the esthetic experience, and vice versa, in a way as yet unequaled by some of our best Marxists.

THE UNITED STATES IN WORLD AFFAIRS, 1937, by Whitney H. Shepardson and William O. Scroggs (Harpers, $3). This annual gives American relations with other lands in this hemisphere more attention than it did formerly, chapters on Mexico and Canada being included for the first time. Also discussed: the war in China, American neutrality, the armaments race, world recovery, if and when.

YOUTH TELL THEIR STORY, by Howard M. Bell (American Council on Education, $1.50). Interviewing some 13,500 young Marylanders, Mr. Bell finds that the "youth problem" is largely the problem of economic security, that "equality of opportunity" (as to education, work, play, etc.) is a bad joke. The consequences of indifference to the needs of youth, he hints, are to be seen in "certain non-democratic countries" over the pond. Important.

INSIDE INDIA, by Halide Edib (Macmillan, $3.50). A distinguished Turkish Moslem gives her personal picture of what is going on in India. Vivid portraits of Indian leaders, notably Gandhi and Nehru, and a remarkably sound analysis of new currents.

SELECTED POEMS, by John Masefield (Macmillan, $2.50). All the stuff of the original "Selected Poems," together with excerpts from many later books. The new issue is printed on cheap stock, its format lacking in eye-appeal.

WILLIAM COWPER: HUMANITARIAN, by Lodwick C. Hartley (University of North Carolina Press, $2.50). Hartley feels that too much has been said of Cowper the recluse; he sets out to give the poet his due as "citizen of the world"—philanthropist, abolitionist, pacifist, "great coadjutor." A summary of the humanitarian thought that got into eighteenth-century verse is provided by the way.

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MATTHEW JOSEPHSON'S most recent book, "The Politicos," was published this spring by Harcourt, Brace.

EDMUND WILSON is the author of many critical studies, of which the most recent is "The Triple Thinkers," published in March by Harcourt, Brace.

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